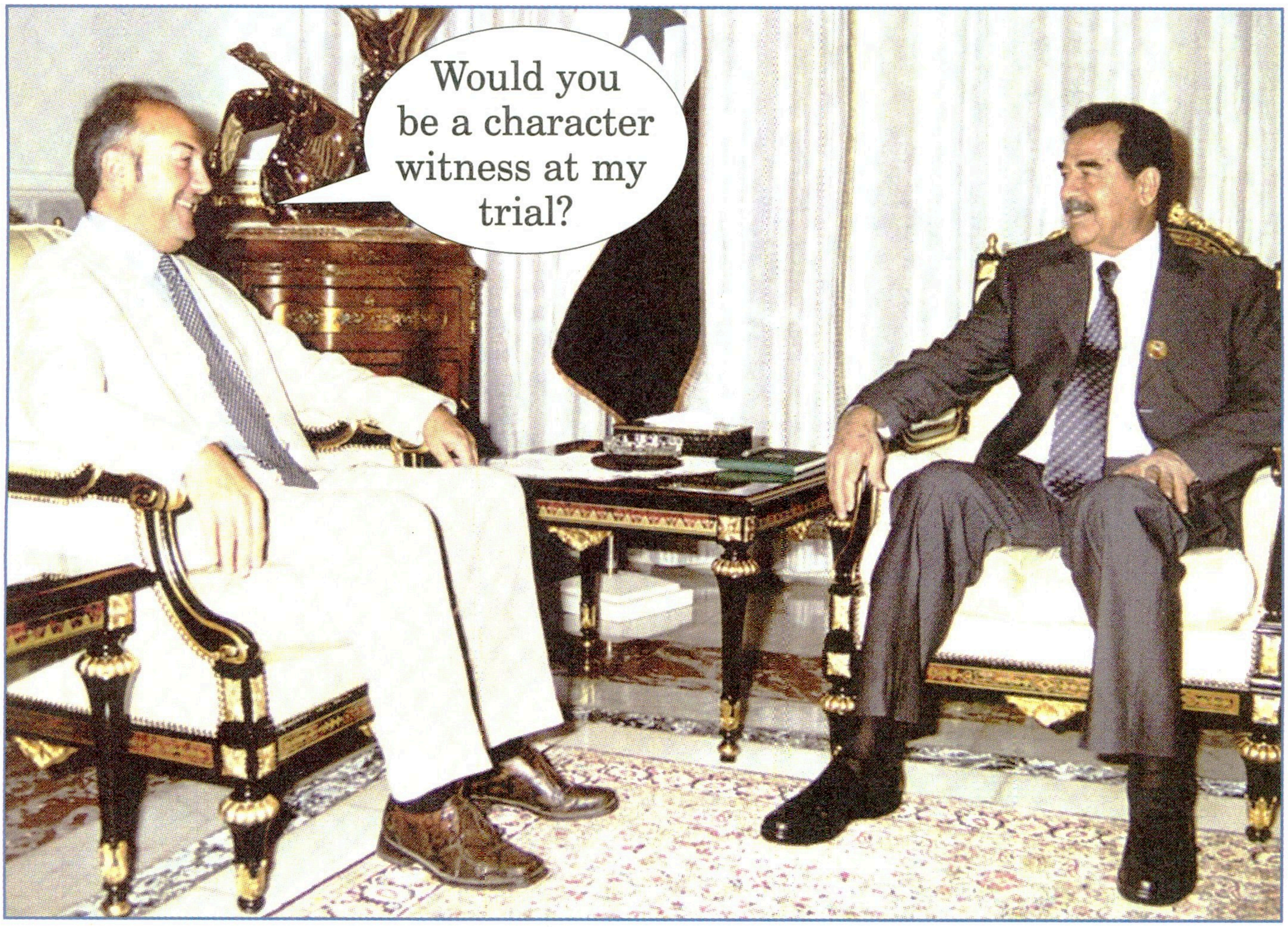
PRIVATE EYE

No. 1079
2 May –
15 May 2003
£1.20

GALLOWAY LIBEL LATEST



INSIDE: FREE SARS FACE MASK

CRÉATEUR D'AUTOMOBILES

RENAULT LAGUNA

Test drive Renault's remarkable new dCi diesel models PDQ, and you'll experience performance that's significantly quieter, smoother, more refined and more powerful. Yet the 2.2 dCi 150 has remarkably low CO_2 emissions and fuel consumption. While the 1.9 dCi was recently voted Diesel Car magazine's Family Car of the Year 2002. Sounds AOK, doesn't it? For more information, call 0800 52 51 50 or visit www.renault.co.uk

dCi...150 BHP...SSH...PDQ...

dCi

...SERIOUS PLAYTIME.

RENAULT recommend elf The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the 2.2 dCi 150bhp are: Urban 33.2 (8.5), Extra Urban 54.3 (5.2), Combined 44.1 (6.4). The official CO_2 emission is 170g/km.
The new Renault Customer Care Package covers every new Renault Laguna and consists of: 3 year, 60,000 mile warranty (a 1 year manufacturer's warranty and 2 year Renault UK Dealer Network warranty – requires full Renault UK Dealer service history); 3 year roadside assistance; 18,000 miles or 2 year servicing interval; 12 year anti-corrosion warranty; 3 year paint warranty.

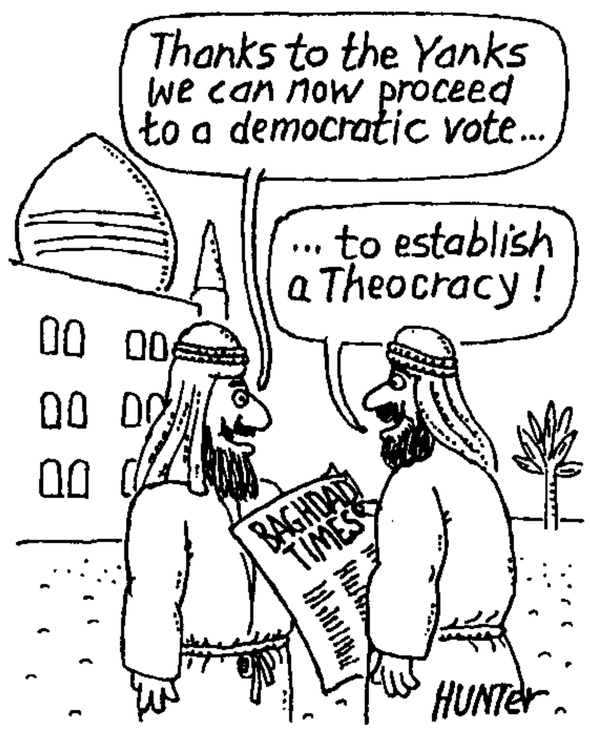
Gnome

INCREDIBLE FREE FACE MASK OFFER

PROTECT you and your loved ones from the epidemic that is killing millions of people in Britain every day.

Simply scan this image into your computer – blow up to face size, cut and then attach string (not included).

Hurry, hurry, whilst panic lasts!



Special Bumper Issue!

Don't miss the next issue of *Private Eye*, including Paul Foot's special report *The Artful Dodgers* – an extraordinary tale of tax avoidance by those who should know better.

On sale 14 May.

EDITORIAL
6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. Tel: 020 7437 4017. Fax: 020 7437 0705. **Email:** strobes@private-eye.co.uk
http://www.private-eye.co.uk

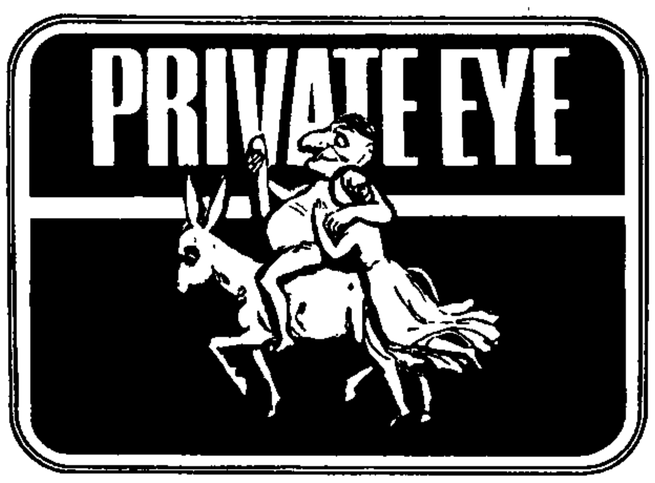
PRIVATE EYE SUBSCRIPTIONS/SALES
PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA.
Subscription enquiries: 0870 750 1714
Fax: 01795 414 555. Overseas: 01795 414 871
Special Reports: 0870 750 1711 **Books:** 0870 750 1712
Email: private-eye@galleon.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
£19 per annum. Europe and Eire £27. Airmail (rest of world) £35. Cheques/POs to Private Eye. Mastercard/Visa.

ADVERTISING
020-7923 5402

Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. **Printed** by BGP Ltd, Bicester OX6 7QZ. **Distributed** by P.E. Distributions, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. 020 7437 4017.

ABC



It's contagious...

- *Court Circular: Why Brenda wasn't amused* 4
- *Charles, Dominic and the hacks at war* 4
- *So farewell, then, Gordon Brown? Tearoom* 6
- *The Cambridge Lies? See Eye TV* 8
- *A poison pen — Geoffrey Levy's Diary* 23
- *Dr Atkins, from soup to nuts: Books* 24, 25
- *Weapons of mass deception? In the Back* 26, 27

THE Daily Telegraph's allegations about Labour MP George Galloway have certainly fuelled the resentment felt by some of his longstanding enemies in the parliamentary Labour party such as John Reid and Adam Ingram.

Pending investigations, Labour's national executive committee may soon be "invited" to remove Galloway's party membership card – thus depriving him of the chance to seek the Labour nomination for the new Glasgow Central constituency.

Funnily enough, knocking Galloway from the running in Glasgow Central would have the advantage of clearing the way for the thuggish Reid, whose Lanarkshire constituency is also disappearing before the next election.

THE *Times* on 26 April carried a heart-rending report from among the smashed statues and empty plinths in the Iraq Museum in Bagdhad, looted in what the paper called "a great loss to the cultural heritage of the world".

"Experts fear that many items, too recognisable to be sold on the open market, are headed for unscrupulous private collectors in New York and Europe," the paper claimed. "Investigators are convinced that some of the looters knew exactly what they were looking for, and may even have been looting to order."

Unfortunately the paper found no room to record an encouraging development in the story which occurred the day before, when customs officers in the US recovered 12 stolen Iraqi paintings. They were found in the luggage of Benjamin Johnson, an employee of the *Times*'s sister company, Fox News Network, as he returned from covering the war in Iraq.

STILL some room for improvement in international airline security, it seems, judging by a recent incident at Heathrow.

A British Airways flight from London to Washington was delayed for four hours when the luggage of a US journalist returning home from the Gulf was found to contain... a rocket-propelled grenade launcher.

Remarkably the hack, who was passing through the UK in transit, was not charged. Though the battlefield souvenir was destroyed, questions remain about how such kit found its way undetected on to British soil in the first place.

TRUE to form, the *Daily Mail* fuelled fears about the pneumonia-like Sars virus while highlighting the threat posed by asylum seekers.

"Hundreds of would-be refugees arrive in the UK every month from China, where the disease is threatening to spiral out of control," the rag claimed. "Even more worryingly, many come from Guangdong, the province at the centre of the outbreak."

In fact hundreds of Chinese and others from south-east Asia are arriving in the UK at the moment courtesy of... the Daily Mail and General Trust plc.

FOLLOWING the outbreak of Sars, one thing was certain: Professor Roy Anderson of Imperial College would soon be hitting the headlines.

And so it came to pass. While the World Health Organisation was being severely criticised by the Canadian government and others for "over-reacting", it found welcome backing last weekend from a report by Anderson which claimed that Sars was twice as deadly as previously thought. "We have not seen the report so we could not comment," a WHO spokesman said, "except to say that this is a top-class professional and any figure he commits himself to is likely to be as close as possible to accurate."

Tony Blair would undoubtedly agree. Two years ago it was Roy Anderson who created the computer model used by the government to claim that the number of foot-and-mouth cases would fall to zero by 7 June 2001. As the *Eye* noted at the time, a certain amount of statistical jiggery-pokery was required to achieve this desirable if implausible result, but it allowed the Dear Leader to call an election for that very date and boast that he had the crisis licked.

Back in 1987 Anderson's mathematical talents again proved useful to a politician's election prospects. He was invited by Norway's prime minister Gro Harlem Brundtland to help produce an "independent assessment" of how many minke whales Norwegians could sustainably kill each year. The International Whaling Commission had introduced a moratorium on commercial minke whaling, which Brundtland feared would lose her support in the northern whaling constituencies. She hoped that a report by a four-man committee of experts, including Anderson, would persuade the IWC to ease the ban.

Lo and behold, the committee came up with exactly the same figure – 200 whales – which the whalers thought they needed to make a profit. But then a mathematical biologist on the IWC's scientific committee went through the algebra and found "fundamental flaws in the methodology": Anderson and his chums had achieved the result Brundtland wanted only by creating unreal (indeed "impossible") parameters.

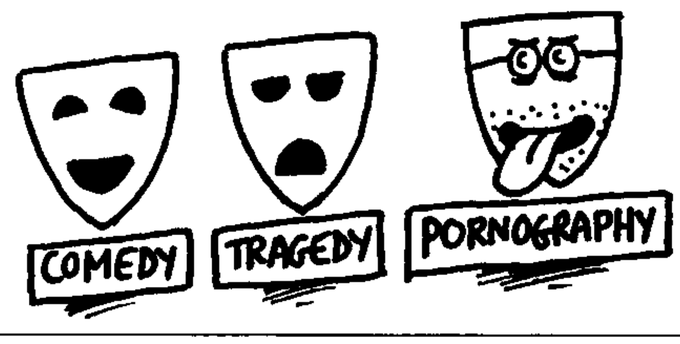
The report was duly rubbished by the experts, just as Anderson's foot-and-mouth model was two years ago. But politicians continue to admire him, including of course the former Norwegian PM. And where is Gro Harlem Brundtland now? By happy coincidence, she is director-general of the World Health Organisation.

Number crunching

300 ■ deaths from SARS epidemic in six months

3,000 ■ people killed by malaria every day

XXX at the RIVERSIDE THEATRE



Street Of Shame

CLAIMS by the US paper the *Christian Science Monitor* at the end of last week that it had evidence of Saddam's regime paying more than $10m to George Galloway will be a useful weapon in the *Telegraph*'s defence of the MP's libel claim against it.

The *Monitor* claims to be in possession of three payment authorizations signed by Saddam's son Qusay and other officials, which it says it received from an anonymous Iraqi general who himself discovered them in a house in a Bagdhad suburb.

The story was widely repeated in the UK press (though curiously not in the *Telegraph*), but the journalist who got this scoop went uncredited. He is Philip Smucker, a Cairo-based correspondent who works for two newspapers: the *Christian Science Monitor* in the US and, in the UK, none other than the *Daily Telegraph*.

He and his colleague David Blair are becoming specialists at finding flame-resistant paperwork in the ruins of Baghdad: just five days before their Galloway revelations, the *Telegraph* reported Smucker's discovery of "the first hard evidence of ties between Iraq and religious terrorism" hanging out of a shredder in the bombed headquarters of the Iraqi intelligence service.

DESPITE the ceasefire in Baghdad, there's no let-up in the ancient feud between Conrad Black's two tribal warlords in London, *Daily Telegraph* editor Charles Moore and his Sunday counterpart Dominic Lawson.

An editorial in Monday's *Telegraph* boasted about its discovery of documents in Baghdad concerning the close relations between French and Iraqi intelligence. "The picture that emerges is not a pretty one," it observed. "Material from the same Iraqi ministry published elsewhere suggests that French diplomats were keeping Baghdad informed about Bush-Chirac summits..."

Published "elsewhere", eh? Even though the two editors are supposedly colleagues, it seems Moore couldn't bring himself to give Lawson even a slight pat on the back by printing the dread words "*Sunday Telegraph*".

RESIDENTS of Basra may be accustomed to the presence of British troops but nothing prepared them for the antics of the British media, exemplified by a lively confrontation between two hacks in one of Saddam's old presidential palaces two weeks ago.

One was the *Mirror*'s pukka war correspondent Tom Newton Dunn – son of a former Tory MEP – whom *Eye* readers will recall as the man who sparked a massive security alert in Belfast five years ago by abseiling down the outside wall of the Europa hotel shortly before Bill Clinton arrived there.

Facilities in Basra aren't quite as good as those at the Europa, and Newton Dunn was desperate to freshen up after a few days in the city. He duly made use of a solar shower which he had found on the bed of an ITN cameraman.

The ITN man was apoplectic when he discovered that his shower had been "borrowed", especially as Newton Dunn hadn't refilled the water tank. "Oh calm down," the well-scrubbed *Mirror* hack replied airily. "Maybe you should have a wank." Whereupon the cameraman punched him on the chin.

VETERAN TV critic Hilary Kingsley suffered a slight memory lapse while writing a spread for the *Mail on Sunday*'s property section on 20 April.

Her feature, "Invite Anna Into Your Bed For a £9,000 Advantage", detailed how wealthy residents of Wimbledon could make a fortune by letting their homes to tennis stars such as Anna Kournikova and Andre Agassi during the tennis championships.

Alas, Kingsley neglected to inform readers how she and her hard-nosed hubby Peter Miller, a former deputy editor of the *Sunday Mirror*, made a small fortune themselves for many years by letting their house in Wimbledon to the likes of Pete Sampras, while they retreated to one of their other properties on the South Coast for the duration.

More strikingly, while puffing the value of Wimbledon houses, Kingsley forgot to add that her own white-pillared mock-Regency mansion near Wimbledon village was recently put on the market for over £3m – but, sadly, there were no takers. Perhaps that will now change.

ANDY BULL resigned as deputy editor of the *Sunday Express* a few weeks ago following his arrest by police investigating subscribers to paedophile websites. But it seems he required some inducement to go: Richard "Dirty" Desmond had to give him a £50,000 pay-off.

Dirty Des was furious at having to shell out. And his fury was redoubled when the Irish edition of the *Daily Mirror* carelessly used a photo of Desmond over a caption claiming that it was Bull. As the *Eye* revealed, Messrs Sue Grabbit & Runne were immediately ordered to sue the *Daily Moron*.

Now, we are glad to report, Des's wrath is assuaged: the *Mirror* has agreed to pay him £75,000 damages for the caption cock-up. "Fucking brilliant!" the porn baron boasts. "I've got back the money I paid Andy Bull – and made a £25,000 profit!"

JUST FANCY THAT!

"The chancellor has again produced a negative on the single currency which the prime minister does not feel strong enough to resist... He has reluctantly conceded to his chancellor's arguments against announcing an attempt to enter the euro."

— Andrew Rawnsley, "Political Journalist of the Year", *Observer*, 20 April.

"Tony Blair is to make it clear that he wants to take Britain into the single currency."

— Political editor Kamal Ahmed, *Observer*, 20 April.

A FEW months ago the *Sunday Times* decided to run a competition offering readers the chance to win Jeremy Clarkson's Ferrari. The Clarkson-mobile was duly delivered to Wapping where it should have sat until the winning entry was drawn.

Unfortunately the paper's managing editor Richard Caseby couldn't resist getting his hands on the boy racer. When he finally returned the vehicle it required £3,500-worth of repairs, including a new clutch to replace the one worn out by his joy-riding, before it could be presented to the lucky reader.

THE *Sunday People*'s new "investigations editor" Nyra Mahmood – no relation to Mazher – has got off to a cracking start.

On 20 April, in her first week in the job, the tyro sleuth produced a two-page "exclusive" revealing that certain *Big Issue* sellers in Bournemouth were also selling drugs. Posing as a customer, she was "astonished to find how easy it was to buy two packets of heroin for £40".

Possibly, as she neglected to add, because they weren't heroin at all. When Nyra returned to London in triumph with her evidence, the two packets were sent to a laboratory for analysis – which revealed that they contained nothing but Bisto gravy granules.

Panic set in at the *People*, where new editor Mark Thomas was determined to introduce his latest signing to readers that weekend with a big splash. So experienced investigative hack Stewart Fowler was hastily despatched to Bournemouth to buy some real heroin, so the paper could still run Nyra's "scoop".

VIRGINIA Ironside, agony aunt of the *Independent*, found a novel way to tackle eating disorders in her column on 13 April.

In response to a letter from the mother of an overweight and unhappy eight year old, Ironside requested opinions from readers who had tackled weight and diet problems. As an incentive, she promised that "anyone with advice quoted will be sent a gift box of luxury organic chocolate".

Court Circular

THE IRAQ war was a logistical nightmare for Buckingham Palace and put great strain on relations with Downing Street. By the time Brenda's team had sorted out their lines of communication, the shooting was all but over.

Because Dubya, not Tony Blair, was calling the shots, the Queen heard war had started via the radio. She was not amused. When the prime minister finally did grant her an audience, his reception was frosty. He then instantly forgot his promises to keep her fully informed. The daily war cabinet minutes often went to the palace the next day in red boxes rather than by special messenger on the same day. An agreement to provide advance copies of significant ministerial statements soon broke down. And promised regular briefings by the PM, defence secretary or chief of the defence staff proved irregular. For a while Brenda had to rely on BBC News 24, whose reporters apparently knew more than her ministers.

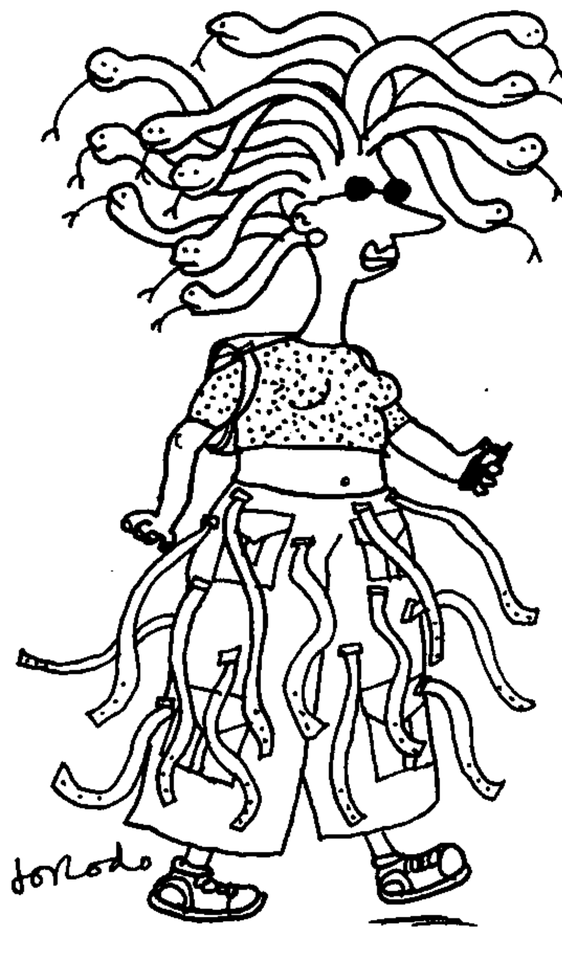
Still, the war's speedy conclusion meant she didn't have to address to the nation or decide which of her children should fly the flag in the Gulf. Andrew and Charles were keen – but under a chump-avoidance plan hatched by private secretary Sir Robert Janvrin and Prince Philip, the job was to have gone to Princess Anne.

There have also been red faces at the palace over the 50th anniversary of the coronation on 2 June. Exhausted by last year's Golden Jubilee, courtiers completely failed to notice the date until Brenda mentioned that she wasn't doing anything that day and what had they planned?

Hence the cobbled together service at Westminster Abbey, live telly and all, which until a few weeks ago wasn't even a twinkle in the lord chamberlain's eye.

PS: "President" Blair says he only took the salute at the sovereign's parade, the Sandhurst passing-out jamboree, because no royal or senior military figure was available. Curiously, that same day's court circular shows just three royals involved in engagements while Blair, with only a country to run and a war to fight, obviously had spare time on his hands.

'Flunkey'



JOHN KENT, who died on April 13, had been a regular contributor to Private Eye since 1969. From Edward 'Grocer' Heath to Tony Blair, via Gnomemart and the Beano, there was not a major political or media figure he had not caricatured – a parade of grotesques for which he will always be remembered.

Number Crunchings

£1.3m
■ amount Reuters spent covering the war in Iraq

£1.6m
■ amount Reuters spend on chief executive's salary

JUST FANCY THAT!

"How many times has the West marched into the Middle East in so brazen a fashion? General Sir Edward Allenby 'liberated' Palestine only a few months after General Maude 'liberated' Iraq."

— Robert Fisk, *Independent*, 7 March.

"A Western army on a moral crusade had broken through to the heart of an Arab city for the first time since General Allenby marched into Jerusalem in 1918. But Allenby walked into Jerusalem on foot, in reverence for Christ's birthplace, and yesterday's American thrust into Baghdad had neither humility nor honour."

— Robert Fisk, *Independent*, 8 April.

THE *Sunday Times* business section reported last week that British investors are following their US counterparts in suing banks whose share analysts issued buy notes for rubbish companies. One of the main examples given was a company called Trafficmaster plc, whose shares peaked at more than £11 but are now worth less than ninepence.

Can this by any chance be the same *Sunday Times* which in 2000 ran a regular share-tipping column by "star analyst" Paul Kavanagh of Killik & Co recommending Trafficmaster shares shortly before they plummeted? If irate investors ever decide to sue him, no doubt the *Sunday Times* will be happy to act as a character witness.

READERS of the *Times* may have noticed the regularity with which the paper's chess correspondent, Raymond "the Penguin" Keene, has been using his column to promote the "official book" of last year's match between Vladimir Kramnik and the Deep Fritz computer program.

Brains in Bahrain has been plugged so often over the past six months that few of Keene's readers can be oblivious to his desire for them to purchase the tome.

But they may not know, since he coyly omits to mention it, that the book's author is none other than the Penguin himself – and that it is published by Hardinge Simpole Ltd, a company of which he is both a director and a 25 percent shareholder.

MAN IN THE EYE

ANTHONY SELDON

WHO is Anthony Seldon, now at work on a political biography of Tony Blair? In a recent item in the *Evening Standard*'s Londoner's Diary, he could barely contain his admiration for the Labour leader. "Blair has been an utterly remarkable Prime Minister. I'd rate him Alpha Plus in my end of term report, remembering of course that school reports are written long before the end of term. He has that potential."

Sometime headmaster of Brighton College, Seldon is the son of free market loonybins Arthur and Marjorie Seldon, who were the inspiration behind the Adam Smith Institute during the 80s. But it is as John Major's official hagiographer that his record merits particular interest.

Some readers might be surprised that a political historian can so easily transfer his allegiance from Major to Blair and take such a reverent view of both. However, this would fail to take into account the protracted swoon into which Seldon falls in the presence of senior politicians. Guests to his house one Easter were surprised to find a Christmas card from Geoffrey Howe still on the mantelpiece.

It was in the mid-1990s that Seldon first penned his paeans to the Major administration, which ultimately paid off when the prime minister consented to his request to serve as his biographer. The love letters had begun in October 1994 in the *Times* when he predicted that "by 1996, John Major could be boasting that his time in office had not only allowed the party to win a general election in 1992 which it could not have won 18 months before, but that it had moreover put the Conservatives on course for the fifth general election victory, which many believed to be impossible in the autumn of 1994… He could yet have the last laugh."

A year later Major's plight had gone from bad to worse, but Seldon was still upbeat. At the end of 1995 he informed *Sunday Times* readers that history would judge Major as "an honourable and capable prime minister… By the following spring he could seize back the initiative."

Come 1996 that initiative still hadn't been seized. But Seldon, now ensconced as Boswell to Major's Johnson, remained in fine OBN form. "He [Major] has exceptional stamina and courage, both physical and mental," he wrote in the *Independent* in May. "He has this overwhelming sense of confidence that he will win the next general election." By September, in the *Sunday Times*, Seldon was of the opinion that "if the Tories continue to improve on their present course, there still is time to pip Labour at the post."

A month later, in the *Daily Mail*, he was even more optimistic. "The Tories in the general election could win back the by-election losses since 1992, which would give them a working majority," he wrote. "John Major's standing and self-confidence have risen… The Tories remain a formidable fighting force as they have shown repeatedly this century. The outcome of the general election is still open."

By the start of the election campaign, it was clear to anyone that the Tories were heading for political meltdown, but Seldon was loyal to the end. An interview with Major in the *Sunday Telegraph* at the end of March 1997 gave him yet another opportunity to parade the PM's "achievements" and look forward to the coming victory.

Alas! The Conservatives duly suffered the worst catastrophe at the ballot box since 1906. No doubt Seldon's eventual book on Tony Blair will contain the necessary arslikhan, but the PM must surely be hoping the hapless historian doesn't forecast a similar electoral triumph for Labour.

WHEN former Torygraph news editor Richard Spencer became the paper's man in Beijing, he was determined to master the local language.

The donnish, bespectacled hack went on a three-month course in Mandarin and fancied he'd picked up the language rather well. A recent trip to visit Paul Gascoigne's new Chinese football club, Gansu Tianma, provided the perfect opportunity to show off his skills.

Once settled in his hotel room in the remote Chinese town, Spencer received a call from reception. He used his newly-acquired Mandarin to establish that the hotel cleaners wanted to service his room. As he congratulated himself on this effortless interchange, there was a knock at the door.

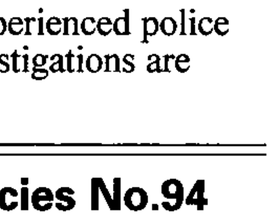
Alas, instead of a cleaner the hapless hack had ordered a scantily clad Chinese lady of the night who was intent on servicing only him. Naturally he turned her away and returned to his trusty Chinese dictionary.

NEWSPAPER editors know – because arts minister Kim Howells told them so – that the So Solid Crew are responsible for gun crime in Britain. So when a 26-year-old was shot dead at a nightclub in east London last week, editors did not let the fact that the group had not performed together or released a record for almost two years, or that not one single member of the 30-strong band was present, stop them pinning the blame on them.

"Another So Solid Crew party, and another man dead" sighed the *Mail*, while the *Sun*, *Mirror*, *Star*, *Evening Standard*, *Express* and *Guardian* all ran the story under headlines featuring the band's name. Their tenuous link was that Lisa Maffia, who used to sing with them, had been due to make a solo appearance at the club on the night, along with a number of other acts. She had, however, cancelled due to illness.

Three days later So Solid Crew played a gig at another club in Hackney. It was held to promote the home office's anti-gun crime campaign. It passed without any violent incident – and therefore without any press coverage either.

POLICE 5



"IRONICALLY the brand 'Scotland Yard Detective' is world famous and synonymous with excellence," notes a report placed before the Metropolitan police authority last week.

In fact, the report goes on, investigative training in the force has been so badly neglected for many years that officers are having to be appointed to senior detective posts with no previous detecting experience. The Met has also suffered from a brain drain into national crime fighting bodies such as NCIS and the NCS. And, the report adds sulkily, the authority is unable to keep up with cutting-edge detecting ideas such as those being researched by the Jill Dando Institute.

The report outlines plans for a new Crime Academy, which police bosses hope may restore the Scotland Yard reputation and solve the detective deficit. Perhaps trained detectives could help the Met avoid further embarrassing failures such as the Damilola Taylor and Stephen Lawrence murder investigations.

"The dangers of having inexperienced police officers in charge of critical investigations are clear," says the report.

Great Education Policies No.94

"By cancelling maths we'll save... nearly got it... three... no, two hours... hang on..."

IN THE TEAROOM

IF YOU believe the scuttlebutt in the tearoom, then Gordon's for the chop. He's come up with the wrong answer on the euro. But how do you square that with the fact that he's been weekending at Chequers with the PM?

There are of course good reasons to sack Brown. On the other hand, post Iraq, the prime minister now has more than his yearned-for footnote in the history books and might be rather less concerned with taking us into the euro as a result. He may well still nurse an ambition one day to be Holy Roman Emperor or whatever Giscard d'Estaing's new constitution will call the new Euro-boss, but he now knows it won't be a shoe-in with Franco-German blessing and his best bet might be to establish an alternative power-base comprising Italy, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands and all those new members that Chirac has obligingly insulted. Better out of the euro, then.

In any case, rumours in advance of a summer reshuffle are not interesting in the sense that they might be true; rather in the sense that who leaks against whom is the closest thing we have to a reliable indicator of what's really going on. At the moment there are two candidates for the supposed vacancy at No 11: David Blunkett and Patricia Hewitt.

Hewitt has the advantage of having once worked at Andersen Consulting and so presumably knows all the tricks when it comes to presenting a deficit as a surplus. Blunkett has the advantage of... er... the energetic support of the off-the-wall think tank Demos. Who, one wonders, could be putting it about that the home secretary is up for promotion?

Then there is the issue of what to do with Jack Straw. Leave him where he is? Make him chancellor? Persuade him to accept some semi-retirement job like leader of the House? And what about that perennial question – whether to bring back Mandy? A double jump to foreign secretary as a sign of steely Euro-determination, perhaps? Or a more tactful reintroduction to the cabinet by replacing Tessa Jowell at culture?

All this of course assumes that John Prescott will go quietly. But it's one thing having Robin Cook on the outside threatening to piss in. If you line up Brown and Prescott beside him then your tent has to be something more than showerproof.

'Urquhart'

THE fiasco of Gordon Brown's new tax credits, whose introduction has left families without money to feed their children, is turning into a disaster.

At one Inland Revenue contact centre, where staff are struggling to handle more than 19,000 calls a day, the computers crash frequently. Staff are reduced to telling exasperated callers that they cannot help them – or promising that they will be paid under a new system within four days while knowing full well there is no guarantee that they will be.

While harassed staff crack under the strain – stress-related sickies are now frequent – some Inland Revenue workers have already walked out and others are talking of strike action. None of which will ease the stress of the hapless families desperate for money.

IT'S good to know someone in parliament has spotted that outsourcing IT systems in the public sector frequently ends up being a costly mess.

Leicestershire MP David Taylor, a former IT manager, condemned the decision to invite the private sector to run IT services for the department for environment, food and rural affairs (Defra) as "as astonishing as it is unnecessary" and the "last desperate act of IT-illiterate top [civil servants] drowning in a whirlpool of technology".

Earlier this month Defra invited companies to tender for the £1.4bn deal. The contract, due to start next summer, would include looking after the livestock and land registers, including disease monitoring, which were so vital in attempting to bring the foot and mouth epidemic under control.

The environment, food and rural affairs select committee has previously strongly criticised the department's "woeful approach" to IT, but rather than try to improve, it seems Defra thinks it can buy a solution.

Previous experience (such as the Inland Revenue's troubled contract with EDS and IT Net's disastrous management of housing benefit and council tax systems in Hackney) suggests it won't be easy.

CLIVE BATES, director of Action on Smoking and Health (Ash), has been a thorn in the side of government for years – not least because of his regular reminders to the media that the ghost of "Bernie's bung" (a nickname coined by Bates) still haunts policy on tobacco advertising in Formula One racing.

So it might come as a surprise to some that after stepping down at Ash last month, Bates has taken a job in government. And not just any branch of government. He has become an adviser in the prime minister's strategy unit at No. 10.

So is Bates sucking up to his new bosses in the March edition of Ash's newsletter? A large print, top of page quote from Bates on the ad ban that came into force in February begins: "This is a credit to the government." Only later (and in much smaller print) does the newsletter mention: "We also despair about the government's attempt to protect Formula One again."

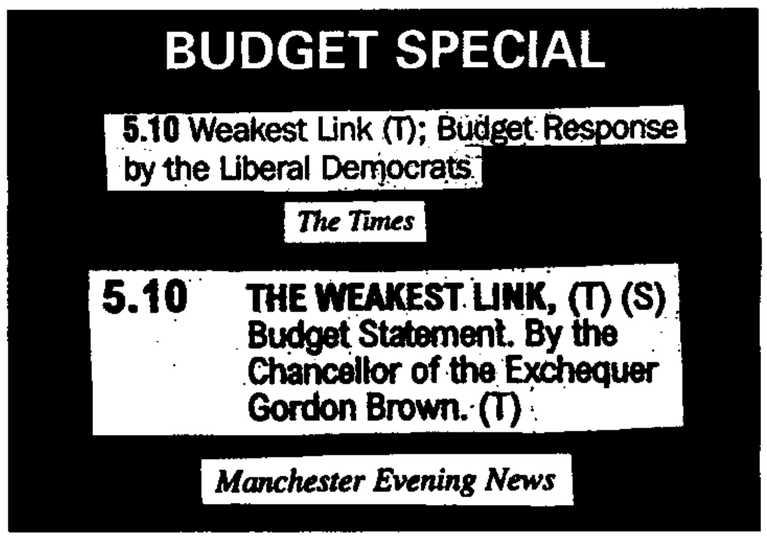
MOST of the cash earmarked for a special scheme to boost the pay of university staff has been spent on consultants fees and staffing review exercises.

Less than a third of the "Rewarding and Developing Staff" initiative cash handed out last year ended up in the pockets of academics.

The £50m scheme for 2002 was announced by the then education secretary David Blunkett in 2000 to improve "academic and support pay" with the aim of helping recruitment and retention of staff.

Research by the Association of University Teachers (AUT) found that vice-chancellors spent just £16m of last year's cash on pay. Much of the rest went on pricey "staff development" schemes.

This year there is £110m in the pot – and the AUT is calling for the national audit office to keep an eye on how it is spent.


BUDGET SPECIAL
5.10 Weakest Link (T); Budget Response by the Liberal Democrats
The Times
5.10 THE WEAKEST LINK, (T) (S) Budget Statement. By the Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown. (T)
Manchester Evening News

THE Learning and Skills Council, the quango that funds and plans education and training for the over-16s, has decided to give its employees a £300 boost towards buying in private health care from Bupa.

The fact that chair of the LSC, Bryan Sanderson CBE, is also the chair of BUPA is, the LSC maintains, "purely coincidental".

ULSTER UPDATE

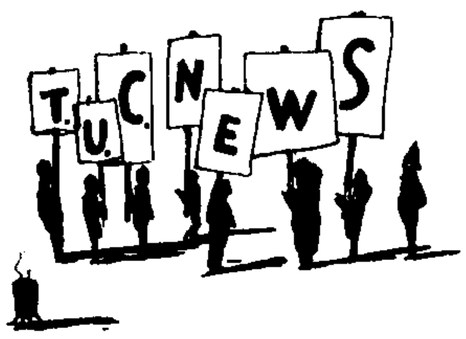
WHILE much of the outcry surrounding the Stevens Report focused on whether Brigadier Gordon Kerr, currently military attaché (ie chief spook) at the British embassy in China, will face prosecution for his role in orchestrating loyalist hit squads, the culpability of other British officials was largely ignored. Only the *Observer*, for example, alluded to the efforts of the ministry of defence's home secretariat to obstruct Stevens' investigations.

The secretariat is responsible for handling all politically sensitive issues concerning the armed forces. Until his resignation the day before the report was published, the unit was headed by Colin Davenport. Wherever Davenport goes, controversy, it seems, is not far behind. Last February he was arrested and questioned by Special Branch over the leaking of extracts from Stella Rimington's memoirs to the *Sun* back in 2000. Rimington subsequently described the leak as a "rather laddish covert operation". Davenport had been a member of the cabinet office committee charged with vetting her book.

It was also the home secretariat which tried to thwart the efforts of the Justice For the Forgotten (JFF) group to compel military personnel to give evidence to the Barron Inquiry based in Dublin (see *Eyes* 1067 and 1071). JFF represents relatives of the victims of the 1974 Dublin and Monaghan bombings which took the lives of 33 people. There is considerable circumstantial evidence that the Ulster Volunteer Force was assisted in this operation by members of the security apparatus in the north. When lawyers for JFF wrote to some of those individuals requesting their presence at the inquiry, they were swiftly and coldly batted away by an anonymous official within Davenport's department.

Meanwhile, further evidence of collusion between the security forces and the loyalists has been produced. In January, not long after articles had appeared in the *Eye*, both the *Sunday Times* and the Irish *Sunday Business Post* noted the latest developments at the inquiry. An explosives expert had submitted a report to Barron which reached the following conclusion: "The loyalist terrorists who undertook this operation were at least guided, and very likely directed, by somebody with considerable knowledge of terrorist bombing activities. The most likely sort of person who could have provided that guidance is an ammunition technical officer or ammunition technician with experience of intelligence processes and practices and with access to loyalist terrorists. Loyalist terrorist groups did not have the skills to undertake this operation in 1974. Further, I do not believe they have ever possessed them, otherwise a similarly complex operation would have been repeated."

Barron was due to have completed his inquiry last year. However, bureaucratic delays on the part of the Northern Ireland office and the MoD have forced him to postpone publication. He is now expected to report this summer.



THESE days it is *de rigueur* for any candidate serious about being elected general secretary of a big union to put as much distance between themselves and "new" Labour as possible.

The logic is simple. Most rank-and-file members can't be bothered to vote, so the only constituency that matters is that of the activists – and they are deeply hostile to Tony Blair and all his works.

Take the case of Kevin Curran, elected to succeed John Edmonds as general secretary of the GMB. Prior to Curran declaring his candidature, he was widely regarded as Number 10's favoured son, someone who could be relied on not to join the "awkward squad" of trade union leaders, unlike his opponent Paul Kenny.

However, within days of Edmonds' announcement that he was stepping down early, Curran came out with a string of Spartist policy statements – reintroduction of the closed shop, strike ballots in every company that tried to cut members' pension schemes, a £5.40 minimum wage and a review of the GMB's relationship with the Labour party.

The strategy paid off. True to form only 90,000 (13 percent) of the GMB's 700,000 members bothered to vote, with Curran garnering only 60,000 of those – less than 10 per cent of the membership. Hardly a ringing endorsement.

PS: When the *Eye* remarked on the poor turnout to the GMB's spokesman we were told: "It's because we were in the middle of Iraq." So how many members *does* the GMB have in its Baghdad branch?

WOULD-BE Transport and General Workers' Union leader Tony Woodley's denials that he is in cahoots with former Militant scouser Derek Hatton would be more convincing if he hadn't used Hatton's web design firm to put together his campaign site.

Several Sunday papers alleged that Hatton was backing and resourcing Woodley's bid to replace TGWU leader Bill Morris. Woodley, also a Liverpudlian, angrily denied the suggestions to the *Liverpool Echo*.

"There is not a shred of truth in the claims," he told the *Echo*. Which is as maybe. What is indisputable is that the domain name registration for his slick and stylish leadership campaign site shows web design firm Rippleffect as "registrant's agent". And Hatton, who has had all kinds of jobs (from radio host to PR guru) since being chucked out of Labour in the 1980s, is one of two directors of Rippleffect (the other being a certain Ben Hatton).

'Blackleg'

"It's not as good as Teacher's"

FOCUS ON ENERGY

THE government's white paper on energy was received with muted relief by environmentalists because it put the emphasis on cutting pollution without proposing a new generation of nuclear power stations. But it looks like a Pyrrhic victory: the government is already committed to open-ended subsidy of nuclear power – officially estimated by the department of trade at £48bn just to clean up the radioactive sites.

All the renewables together, which ought to replace the nukes, are promised only an extra £60m; and critics wonder if this will be real money or Gordon Brown money.

The signs are worrying. It is known that the energy review as originally drafted would have given a figure of 20 percent of our electricity coming from clean renewable sources by 2020 as a "target". But that was watered down to an "ambition."

Says Mark Johnston, head of the energy group in the Labour party's environmental wing SERA: "This is a game all too familiar. The government has become allergic to setting 'targets' because it does not like applying itself to meeting them."

Opponents of burning gas to make electricity wonder how the government can square its newfound support for clean air – and its hope of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent by 2010 – with the permission it gave less than three months ago to an American company to build a huge, 860-megawatt gas-fired power station in the New Forest.

Since then Brian Wilson, the energy minister who is completely subservient to the oil and gas lobby inside the DTI, has even given the go-ahead to British Petroleum to increase the capacity of its gas-fired power station at Hythe, Hampshire, from 48 megawatts to 53.

The weakest section of the white paper is in its attitude to potentially largescale generating projects. A Severn tidal barrage is dismissed on the grounds that it would not be fruitful to pursue "at this stage." That has been the theme of numerous government studies for the past 80 years. A barrage would be opposed by some misguided environmentalists but that problem could be overcome if the government made it plain that the alternative would be another nuclear power station on the Bristol Channel.

And there is no suggestion that the government might build a major, clean energy station out at sea where it would meet no conceivable environmental objection, harvesting wave power. The government confines itself to "supporting industry" to do the work. Industry is at present plainly not interested in going beyond supporting smallscale projects, in no way a rival to gas or nuclear. It is not going to invest the major sums which are needed if either tidal or wave power are to become major contributors to the grid. That sort of money is provided only by government – and only to the dying nuclear industry.

It is the nuclear puzzle which still dominates the scene. Wilson said that the halt to building new nuclear power stations would be reconsidered after five years. Given that it takes about 10 years from a decision to build until the monster comes on stream, this looks like up to 20 years before anything would happen. It looks no more than a placebo to the nuclear buffs.

Their leader is one Tony Blair and this is intended to save his face. He has been ardent in support of nuclear power ever since he was the shadow spokesman on energy in 1989 and was taken by one of his predecessors, John Cunningham, to meet the management and unions at Sellafield. Blair's speech was reported in the *Sellafield Newsletter* under the heading "Total Commitment". He said: "Whatever policies are going to be pursued, it is absolutely vital that Sellafield remains and provides a function on behalf of the country that cannot be provided anywhere else."

It could be argued that he was referring to Sellafield's role in disposing of radioactive leftovers. But Cunningham added his voice and made it clear that they meant nuclear power stations – which produce the problem. It is possible that even some leading members of the government are aware that Blair may not be their leader in 20 years' time. But they are not going to say so now.

DOWN ON THE FARM

IT IS not often this column says nice things about supermarkets, but hats off to Asda for its £1.1m campaign to stick a union jack on all homegrown products in its stores, together with a label certifying that they are "British".

This may not seem a particularly brave or revolutionary marketing ploy. But it must be remembered that to label British food as British is a breach of the criminal law. This is because of those Alice in Kafka-land rules from the EU which make it illegal to label food with its country of origin because Brussels regards this as discriminatory chauvinism.

Under the logic of EU law, it is perfectly legal to stick a union jack on a frozen chicken and describe it as "produced in Britain", but only so long as this is not taken to mean that the chicken itself was grown in the UK. All that matters is where the food was processed and packaged. If you import your frozen chicken from Thailand, so long as it is processed and packed in Britain it is legal to call it "British". The same applies to Danish and Dutch bacon plastered in red, white and blue to fool patriotic shoppers into thinking it came from Essex pigs.

Naturally this kind of chicanery infuriates British farmers, just as much as it infuriates those from France, Germany and everywhere else in the EU. The rules are so crazy that countless efforts have been made to get round them, and to pass on to shoppers the information many of them would like to know. One of the most pitiful was the NFU's "Little Red Tractor" scheme, intended to kid shoppers into thinking that any food bearing this label came from a British farm. In fact, as even the NFU was at last forced to admit, it meant nothing of the kind. All the silly little tractor actually meant was that the product in question had been produced to "British farm standards", which meant nothing at all. Consumers had no guarantee that the product had not originated in France, Ireland or anywhere else.

The French themselves resorted to labelling food "Not made in France', which was one way round the problem. A Tory MP, Stephen O'Brien, even had the cheek to introduce a bill in parliament which would have made it legal to stick a "British" label on British food, and illegal to put such labels on food from anywhere else. He was supported by MPs of all parties. But in the end he was slapped down by the minister, Joyce Quin, who pointed out that his bill was an offence against EU law and that it would be "an abuse of parliamentary procedure" to allow it to continue.

So this is the law Asda is now proposing to flout head-on. From now on, if a packet of bacon in Asda says "British", it means precisely that. Asda is well aware it is breaking the law, but it is gambling that its campaign will be so popular that the busybodies from trading standards will not dare take them to court for fear of being laughed out of it. But the fact we can commend Asda for showing the law to be an ass, doesn't mean we have to shop there. It is still possible to go down to the local farm shop, safe in the knowledge that its produce is home-grown, because that is the point of farm shops. And so far Brussels hasn't found a way to ban them.

'Muckspreader'

FYE TV

Cambridge Spies (BBC)

A NUMBER of newspapers suggested in early preview pieces that the BBC's new four-part drama about Philby, Burgess, Maclean and Blunt was "written by Steven Moffat". This certainly seemed a bold and intriguing commission.

What might the award-winning creator of the BBC2 sex-farce *Coupling* make of the nation's great espionage story? We excitedly awaited a scene in which Blunt is looking after Burgess's porn collection but Philby has misheard when Maclean revealed that his new au pair came from Eastbourne. Donald heard "Estonia" and so bamboozles the poor girl with Eastern European aphorisms, while she keeps saying that she "loves the pier", which Philby takes as a reference to Lord Beaverbrook. And so on.

Sadly, it turns out that **Cambridge Spies** is, in fact, scripted by Peter Moffat, which means that we get something rather more respectful and serious. But – as the *Telegraph*, *Mail* and others have already been asking in thundering preview pieces – how serious and how respectful?

As is now traditional in drama-documentary, the series starts by flying the red rag: "Certain events and characters have been created or changed for dramatic effect." If you went for a drink with a friend or a lover and they began the conversation by saying "several major statements I make in the next hour or so will be completely bogus", you'd think twice about the date. Viewers of drama-docs, however, are just expected to put up with a similar level of unreliable narration.

Here's an example of how it works. There's a gripping scene in which Philby (Toby Stephens) is given the chance to assassinate Franco but chickens out. When he emotionally confesses to his chums, one of them consoles him with the line: "If I had to choose between betraying my country and betraying my friend, I hope I would have the guts to betray my country."

Well, we happen to know that that line was actually said by E.M Forster. So where does that leave us on the matter of Philby's attempted Franco assassination? Did Moffat make that up as well? The reassignment of dialogue may be claimed as dramatic licence, but why is it substantively different from giving Neville Chamberlain the speech about fighting them on the beaches? Once the *Oxford Dictionary Of Quotations* becomes unstable, a historical drama is in trouble.

In other cases Moffat has helped us at a press conference by admitting that he made it up. His acknowledged inventions include the moment when the chums start a fight at varsity after someone makes an anti-semitic remark to Philby's Jewish girlfriend and a sequence in which the young Kim organises a strike of the poorly-paid college staff. In later episodes, it's specifically suggested that the spies are pro-Stalin because he's the best bet of saving the Jews from Hitler but this was a backwards rationalisation worked out years later by the left.

Cambridge Spies is an American co-production and the pro-Jewish stance (historically unlikely in upper-class Englishmen of that period) will certainly help many viewers in the US to overcome their instinctive revulsion against communists.

Another interesting emphasis is that episode one begins with Philby shagging a woman, episode three with Maclean picking up a woman in a bar and episode four with a woman giving birth. Given the centrality of homosexuality to the spy ring, you wouldn't necessarily have expected the howls of female orgasm and childbirth to play such a large part on the soundtrack; but perhaps this helps to neutralise another worry about the attitude of American viewers. The exaggerated prominence given to James Jesus Angelton of the CIA also hints that the budget-split is talking through the script.

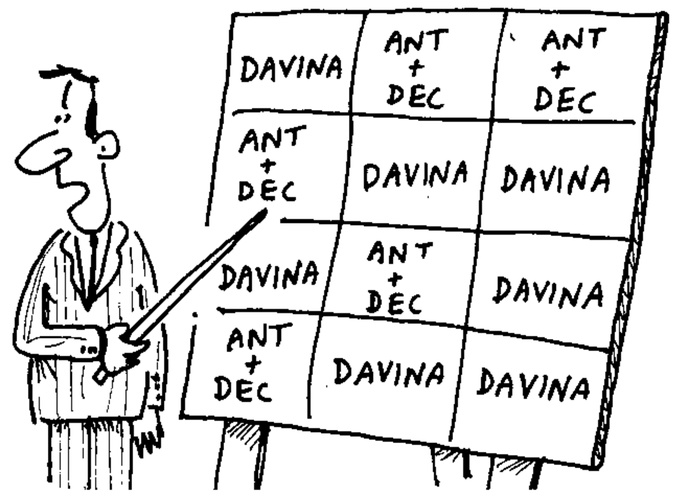
Tim Fywell's direction includes frequent references to other dramas, which may be deliberate or a sub-conscious attempt to swell the potential audience. When the boys are up at Cambridge, it's inevitably all *Brideshead*, until it becomes *Pride And Prejudice* in a scene where the future spies jump naked into the Cam.

In Vienna, of course, the playbook is *The Third Man*, while the long Buck House scenes unsuccessfully trying to present the Queen (later the Queen Mother) as a bit of a wag evoke the BBC's other big drama of this year, *The Lost Prince* (sensibly there are no references to Alan Bennett's rather better TV versions of these events). Spying is about making things up convincingly. *Cambridge Spies* never manages it. You keep worrying that the American co-production money has made the drama a double-agent. When there's a really good bit – such as Blunt being freed from spying after carrying out an act of espionage for the king – you simply stop to wonder if it's really true.

Typical of the drama's failure of tone is a moment in episode four when Blunt happens to call on the Queen to advise her on her art just as Princess Elizabeth is cradling her new-born who mewls. "Oh, do be quiet, Charles,", she croons. Blunt peers down at the baby and comments: "Terrific ears for a young chap."

A drama which will take such a detour to shoe-horn in that silly anachronism – yet which often seems to be playing down the fact that the information peddled by the spies led to many deaths – is a pretty rum piece of work. If they were so keen on comedy, perhaps they should have got Steven Moffat instead.

'Remote Controller'



"We haven't actually thought of the programmes yet but basically that's the schedule"

MEDIA NEWS

BBC staff across the UK, as well as Delhi and even Baghdad, are standing by for "The Big Conversation", a massive exercise in networking designed "to really make a difference".

It's the culmination of the Making It Happen initiative in which seven "theme teams", 17 "divisional teams" and 400 "top managers" wasted lots of licence-payers' money providing local radio staff with bigger car parks, making sure that flowers "happen" in reception and that canteen colour schemes are updated.

Sadly, so few staff have shown an interest in joining in that a massive bribe – a chance to win cup final or Wimbledon tickets – has been provided for anyone who applies.

A LABOUR politician caught up in a web of murder, deceit and behind-the-scenes political machinations? Probable as it might sound, *Thursday the 12th* was a work of fiction – a TV drama due to have been screened on ITV1 on 25 April.

Despite enthusiastic previews the ill-fated programme disappeared at the last minute after lawyers got cold feet, fearful that the murder mystery might affect the way people voted in May's local elections. It may have to wait some time to be rescheduled.

Of course the local elections have been planned for quite some time. Since the ITV Network's policy statement for 2003 promotes the programme as one of the drama highlights of the year, you'd have thought it might have given a little more thought to the scheduling. Almost enough to make you suspect political machinations behind the scenes.

LAST autumn some BBC bigwigs wondered why the government was so determined to ensure that history professor Merfyn Jones was appointed to the corporation's board of governors as national governor for Wales.

If they saw the *Sunday Times* travel section on 20 April, they may now be less puzzled. It included a long piece by broadcasting minister Kim Howells extolling the virtues of his best mate, fellow hill-climber and holiday companion… Professor Merfyn Jones.

DUMB BRITAIN

Family Fortunes, ITV

Andy Collins: Name a red liquid.

Contestant: Mercury.

Collins: Is Mercury red? Let's see if it's there... No, bad luck, I didn't think it was red.

Contestant: I wasn't sure if it was red or green.

The Weakest Link, BBC2

Anne Robinson: Which Andy, created by Reg Smythe, first appeared in the *Daily Mirror*?

Contestant: Andy Gilchrist.

Steve Wright's Big Quiz, Radio 2

Wright: Which comet was last seen in 1986?

Contestant: Robin Williams.

"*Dahlia Rafael:* **How long will the US have to shell out two billion dollars per month?**

Nick Charles (at the Pentagon): **That, in a way, is the 64,000-dollar question.**"

(*Morning Reports*, BBC Radio Five Live.)

Supermodel harassment charges dropped

Crown Prosecution Service lawyers have dropped charges against a kitchen porter accused of harassing supermodel Claudia Schiffer, it has been announced today.

Daily Telegraph website

OUT OF CON-TEXT

THE Chisinau National Opera's production of *Carmen*, which visited the Hammersmith Apollo last week, scaled new heights in the irrelevancy of its advertising.

Lacking any major human stars to trail on the poster (its cast is drawn from various eastern European countries), it plugs the appearance of "A MAJESTIC ANDALUCIAN STALLION featured in the film GLADIATOR", alongside the opinion of the *Observer*'s Fiona Maddocks that the production is "impassioned and sultry".

Maddocks, in a piece written in 2001, actually used those words to describe the character of Carmen, rather than the staging, which she called "woefully staid".

THE NEOPHILIACS

"Uncertainty is the new normality." — Edmond Warner, *Guardian*.

"Why Damien Hirst is the new Turner." — Bonnie Greer, *Mail on Sunday*.

"Bums have been the new boobs for well over a year now." — Lesley Thomas, *Daily Telegraph*.

"The velour tracksuit is the new pashmina." — Cheryl Knoteh, *Financial Times*.

"Mobile phones are the new chocolate." — *Sydney Morning Herald*.

"Is gardening the new sex?" — Question to panel on *Gardeners' Question Time*.

"Eighty is the new seventy." — *Autocar*.

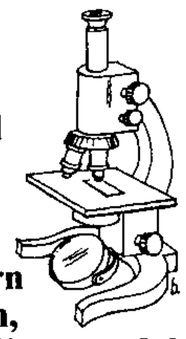
"2005 looks to be the new 2002." — Bill Jamieson, *The Business*.

"Tea is the new coffee." — *Glamour*.

"Gascony is the new Gloucestershire." — *Country Life*.

"Bristol really is the new Hollywood." — *Bristol Evening Post*.

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE



NEWS reports that SARS could turn out to be "worse than Aids" are certainly alarming. Aids has killed tens of millions worldwide and impoverished much of southern Africa. If we are looking at a rerun, Sars could indeed be the greatest disaster of the 21st century.

Reassuringly, however, the source of this particular prediction turns out to be none other than the preposterous Dr Patrick Dixon, a London-based one-man think-tank and self-proclaimed "expert on future trends" (his chosen area of expertise during the current crisis). Whenever a scientific or medical issue with ethical ramifications crops up – such as Aids, cloning or a new disease – up pops Dixon too, predicting the end of the world or at least life as we know it.

Sars is not Aids. It is caused by a completely different type of virus, with a completely different means of transmission. Saying, as Dixon did last week, that Sars has a "25 percent chance" of developing into an Aids-style pandemic is meaningless unless Dr Dixon can come up with some sound epidemiological evidence for this figure.

Dixon is of course entitled to his interesting views; but when he strays into the dangerous world of facts he is on shaky ground. When the only-slightly-more-ludicrous Raelians claimed they had cloned a baby at Christmas, the polymath Dixon, who was then touted as "an expert on the ethics of cloning", stated, with a straight face, that he had "no reason to doubt" that a human had been cloned. "2003 will go down in history as the Year of the Clone," he states, solemnly and almost certainly wrongly.

Patrick Dixon may be a character out of Viz magazine, but he is given the time of day not only by the tabloids but by those at the Guardian, Times and BBC who are supposed to know better.

'Boffin'

LUVVIES

Actors, like the doctors in Chekhov, are often consumed by a sense of having betrayed their own calling, of having disappointed themselves and God; the dachas in which so many of the plays take place are like so many green rooms.

SIMON CALLOW
Grauniad

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"There is no list, and Syria isn't on it."

— Jack Straw, *Guardian*.

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore

Ken Dodd & the P Diddy Men

LEGAL NEWS

"GUESTS will not publish any account of the Ball nor make any recordings or take any photographs at the event." So invitees of an upcoming ball in central London are told, only days after the high court ruled in favour of Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta Jones, who had imposed similar terms on their many "close friends" who attended their New York wedding, in order to make a packet from *OK!* magazine. *(surely "protect the dignity of a solemn and very personal moment in their lives"? Ed.)*

As a result, conditions of this nature are likely to appear all the more frequently. But it is not only celebs who seem keen to take advantage of the ruling. The above wording comes from the application forms for tickets (£125 each) to the Inns of Court Annual Ball, due to be held in the Middle Temple on 28 June.

The event has not previously been the subject of a bidding war between *Hello!* and *OK!* But perhaps m'learned friends are more concerned about bad publicity that might be given to the drunken antics and loutish behaviour of barristers and judges that has become standard at the event? It is not long since the carnage left one summer led to calls for the whole thing to be scrapped.

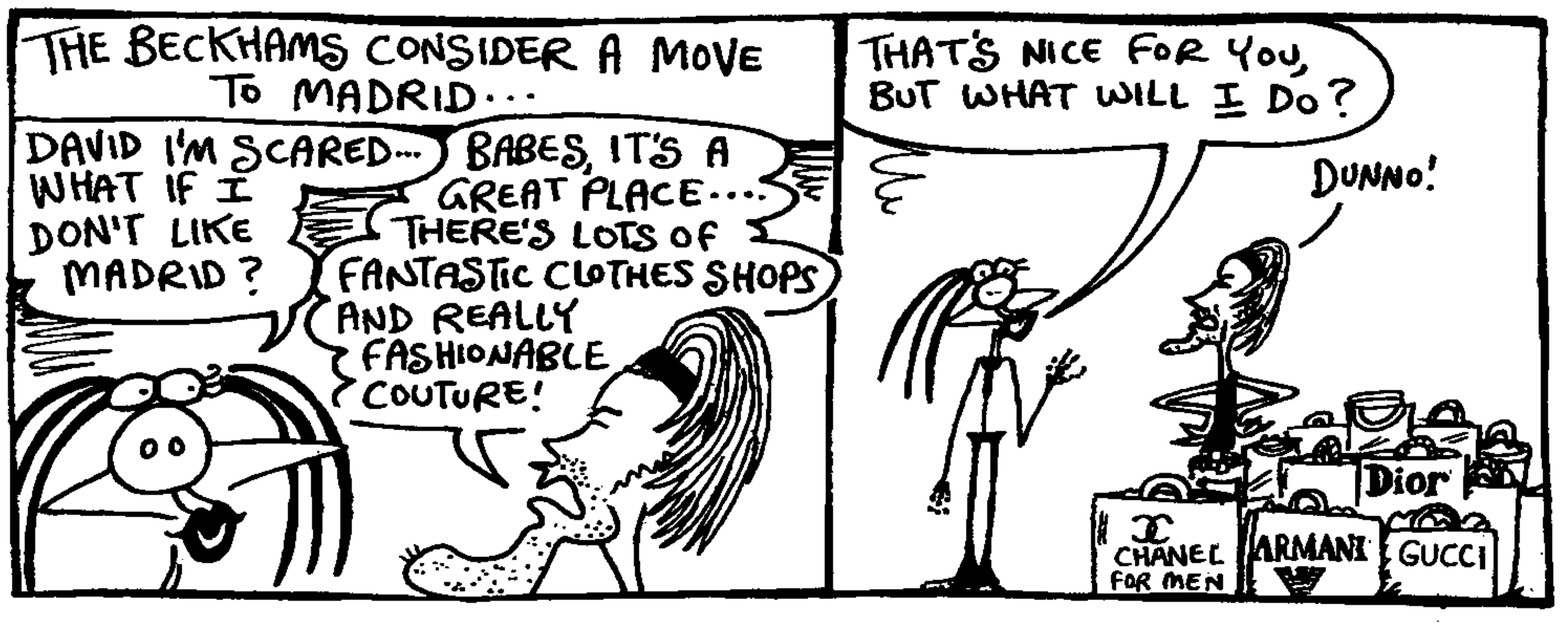
MODESTY CORNER

"Sometimes I think about sending some terrorists one of my albums to see if it strikes a chord with them and they think, 'What have I been doing with my time, terrorising people? There's music out there. It's brilliant.'"

— Badly Drawn Boy, *Independent*.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER


THE BECKHAMS CONSIDER A MOVE TO MADRID...
DAVID I'M SCARED... WHAT IF I DON'T LIKE MADRID?
BABES, IT'S A GREAT PLACE... THERE'S LOTS OF FANTASTIC CLOTHES SHOPS AND REALLY FASHIONABLE COUTURE!
THAT'S NICE FOR YOU, BUT WHAT WILL I DO?
DUNNO!
CHANEL FOR MEN
ARMANI
Dior
GUCCI

DOING THE ROUNDS

The Limits of Medicine

THE failure of "new" Labour to turn round the NHS and deliver value for our extra billions is not just because its model of central control using simplistic targets is flawed (*Eyes passim ad nauseam*). It's also down to the over-hyping of medicine.

Whatever model of healthcare we have, doubling the amount we spend won't make us twice as healthy because the treatments don't work as well as the pharmaceutical industry claims. As Richard Smith, editor of the *British Medical Journal*, recently observed: "Medicine is increasingly about complex and multiple interventions in chronically sick patients with marginal improvements."

Smith's comments were in response to two studies (*BMJ*, 11 January). The first looked at trying to stop elderly patients with dementia who had already fallen from falling again. 274 patients were assessed by doctors, physiotherapists and occupational therapists, and then one group was randomised to receive intervention on every possible risk factor including balance, drugs, environmental hazards, feet and footwear, and vision. A huge amount of time and effort went into this study and into active treatment. But the result was no improvement compared with conventional care: three-quarters of patients in both groups fell again and a fifth died.

A more optimistic study from Aberdeen examined the four-year results of a trial of secondary prevention in more than 1,300 patients with coronary heart disease. Patients in the intervention group received multiple tests, treatments and advice. The result after four years was 128 deaths and 125 "coronary events" (eg heart attacks) in the control group and 100 deaths and 100 events in the intervention group. A modest success story, but not without considerable effort and organization usually not available outside the constraints of funded research.

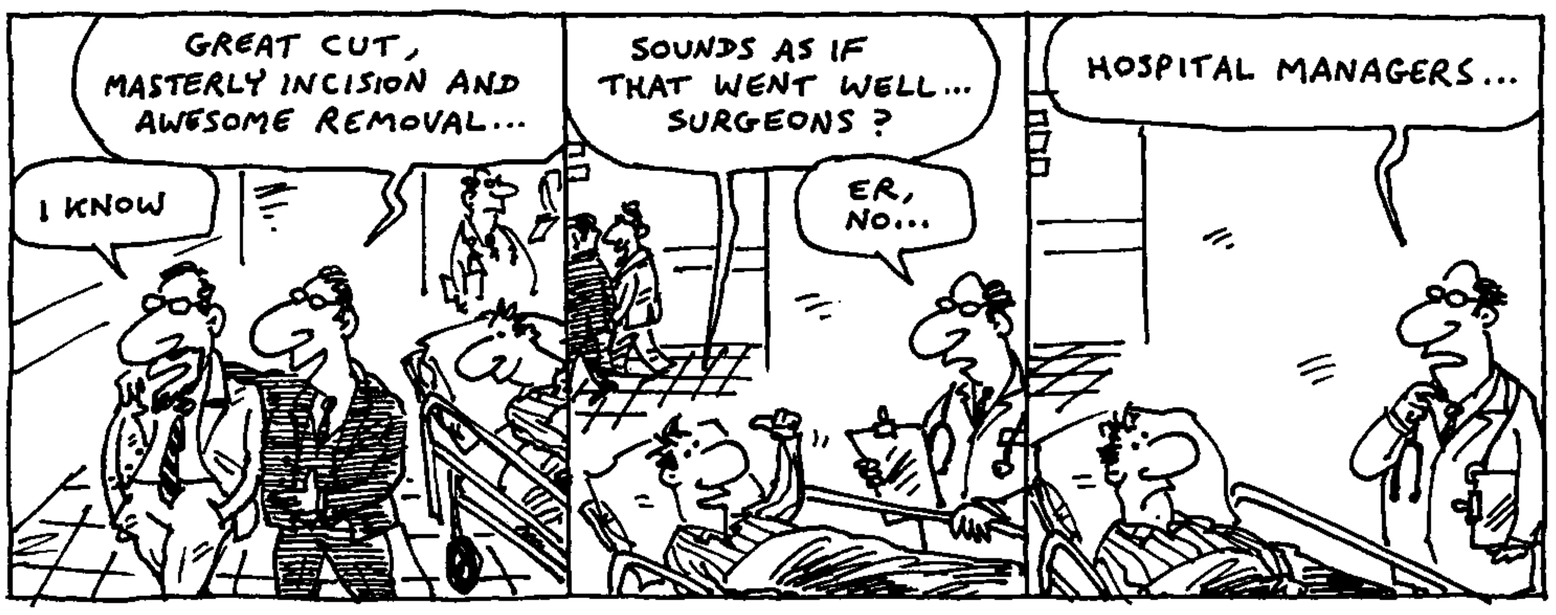
● FURTHER evidence of the huge amount of effort required to eke out small benefits is found in research into cervical screening (*BMJ*, 25 April). This is the best model of screening we have and saves 1,300 lives a year. But to prevent one death, we have to screen 1,000 women for 35 years. And for each life saved, 150 other women have abnormal results, 80 of whom will be referred on for investigations and possible treatment and one woman will die of cervical cancer despite receiving the best possible screening. Aside from the organisation and workload involved, even good screening creates large amounts of anxiety and treatment for women who are never going to get cancer. And it only stops half of those who are.

For breast screening the evidence of benefit is far less. In 2001, a prestigious Cochrane review of all the best available studies lead the editor of *The Lancet*, Richard Horton, to conclude: "At present, there is no reliable evidence, from large randomised controlled trials, to support mammography services." At best, we have to screen 1,000 women over 50 for 10 years to save one life, and yet many more suffer the anxiety of abnormal results, invasive breast surgery and chemotherapy for no benefit. The popular perception that a pathologist can always make a clear distinction between cancer and non-cancer has always been false. There is a whole spectrum of cell changes that no one has a clue as to the significance of, but in a litigious society the "safe" option is to offer aggressive treatment.

Earlier this year, the *Eye* revealed that in 75 percent of drug trials, anti-depressants are no more effective than placebos. This provoked a large, predominantly supportive response from *Eye* readers. The respected Critical Psychiatry Network is holding a debate in London on 3 June entitled "Antidepressants are no better than placebos" (see www.critpsynet.freeuk.com/Press2003.htm.). With eminent psychiatrists doubting the very few treatments they have, and "new" Labour favouring coercion and control in their mental health policy, it's not a great time to be mad.

M.D.

off your trolley REEVE & WAY



SIGNAL FAILURES

Network Failed

WHY did Paddington station close for almost five days over Easter? Why were passengers on Britain's busiest railway, the west-coast mainline, forced on to buses for part of the way? Why was the east-coast line, the alternative for London-Scotland passengers, closed in two places while the west-coast was disrupted?

The official answer is that closing track during maintenance is safer and gets the job done cheaper. The general acceptance of so much upheaval shows how far the railway has sunk since the days when a major station like Paddington would have stayed open with a reduced service even if the signals were being replaced.

But at least maintenance costs and staff accidents have been reduced. Er, not quite. Infrastructure projects now cost three to five times more than under British Rail. In 2001-02 (the latest year shown in official figures), fatalities among track workers rose 100 percent and major injuries to rail employees were up 17 percent.

Responsibility for the part-time rail network remains divided between scores of parties. Infrastructure owner Network Rail may be a public company (although the treasury insists it's a private one for the purposes of "Enroning" the books – *Eye* 1059) which is funded, directed and guaranteed by the state, but it relies on private contractors for even its most vital functions. Contractors aren't aligned to NR's supposed public-interest goal because they exist to satisfy their shareholders, so NR wastes increasing resources supervising and checking them.

Over the last eight years the *Eye* has catalogued shocking safety lapses by contractors, but problems continue. In March an inquest heard how a Balfour Beatty lookout, responsible for his colleagues' safety, was killed by a train he knew was approaching because he stood too near the track.

The principle of using maintenance contractors was discredited during Railtrack's tenure (*Eyes passim*) and NR seemed to respond last year when it took one contract back in-house, with two more to follow. But NR directors say this is a benchmarking exercise and doesn't reflect on the quality of work by the likes of Balfour Beatty (the contractor that should have prevented a broken rail causing the Hatfield derailment in 2000). NR is even doling out new contracts: in March it awarded six 10-year deals to various consultants and their sub-contractors for inspection of structures, including tunnels and viaducts, and gave itself the task of inspecting the inspectors.

NR has experienced engineers but is short on train-operating expertise. That's an improvement on Railtrack, which lacked any kind of expertise; but still too little attention is paid to keeping the trains running. When engineers want to turn chunks of the network into building sites, nobody in the industry has the clout or desire to resist temporary closures. The "strategic" rail authority is too busy propping up the daft concept of train franchises. Train operators are happy – they're lavishly compensated by NR for each closure, even though infrastructure maintenance is crucial to their business.

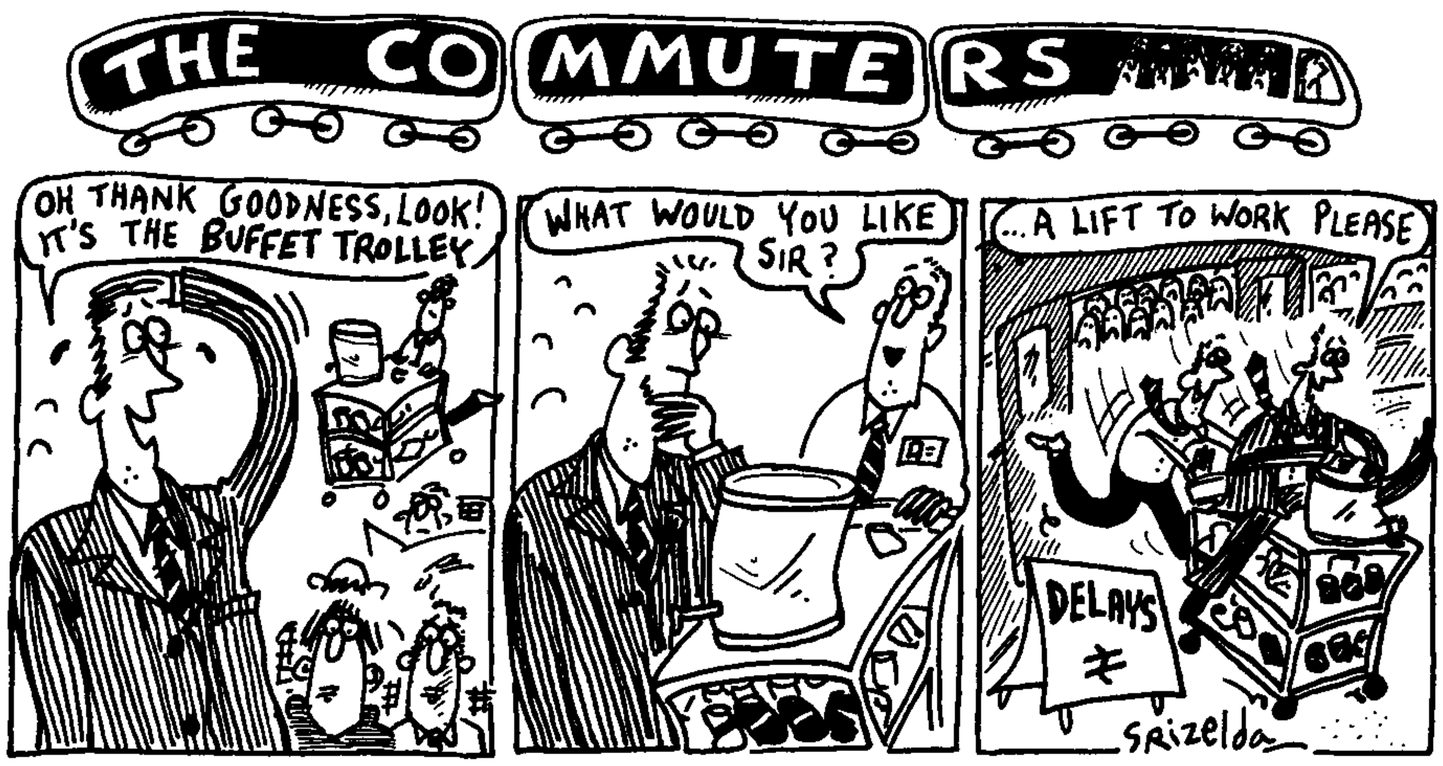
Although the Health and Safety Executive's website says "rail travel remains a much safer means of travelling than the private car", the same HSE insists the safest way to maintain tracks is to close them to trains. That usually forces passengers on to roads, where they're not the HSE's problem, and is simpler than creating a stable workforce that knows how to stay safe on a live railway.

● DESPITE cancelling half its services to Oxford earlier this year "to help focus and develop the service", Virgin Trains is keen its passengers should visit the dreaming spires.

A page in the latest issue of *Hotline*, the glossy magazine the company can still afford to print and distribute on all trains, is devoted to the unmissable attractions of the "dream city".

It is illustrated with a large picture of St John's College, Cambridge. Virgin Trains don't go there.

'Dr B. Ching'



ROTTEN BOROUGHS

HAVERING A GO

PASSION has come to politics in the London borough of Havering, where the full council meeting on 16 April was abandoned amid scenes of uproar.

Opposition Residents party councillor Jeff Tucker was seen waving a Bible and boxing gloves while attempting to make a statement about alleged threats to himself and his family. Cllr Tucker was distressed after an encounter with senior Tory Alby Tebbutt (*Eyes passim*) on polling day for a council by-election on 3 April.

Cllr Tebbutt – aka "the Removals King of Romford" – tells the *Eye* that he and a Tory colleague had come across Cllr Tucker tearing down Conservative posters. Tucker denies doing any such thing, but both agree that words were exchanged. "He made it clear to me that I had a war on my hands," says Tucker. "On the previous day he had showed me a baseball bat. I wanted to speak out at the meeting on behalf of all the little people, to say that we will not stand for threats and bullying."

Tebbutt, who received a two-month suspended sentence in 1991 for thumping the chairman of a local residents' association, says baseball bats are not his style. "He's a bleeding liar," he tells the *Eye*. "I think what's happened is he's upset and he's imagined it. He's an ex-boxer. I should be afraid of him." And so the tradition of Burke and Disraeli lives on in east London...

DONCASTER RACES

DONCASTER council last year commissioned Prof Gus John to investigate the needs of ethnic groups in the town. In his report, John condemned the ruling Labour party and its leaders as being "at ease with institutional racism".

Elected mayor and master of bollockspeak Martin Winter rejected the report, claiming "race relations are very good". Jane Kidd, the cabinet member responsible for race issues, said John's findings were inaccurate. And Doncaster Central constituency Labour party, home of fragrant John Prescott fan Rosie Winterton MP, angrily dismissed the report.

So how good are race relations? Well, the first two in a series of racial harassment and discrimination cases involving the council have now resulted in Doncaster making substantial settlements; and two more racially sensitive cases are due in tribunal soon.

Disgraced Unison officer Frank Perks, who was handed a final written warning for harassing a black colleague (*Eyes passim*) and then had to quit following a resounding defeat in the union elections, recently held a farewell bash at a pub near the council offices. In attendance was Mayor Winter and his deputy Aidan Rave, 13½.

● THE ruling Tories at Welwyn-Hatfield council have thrown open the debate about privatisation of council services and done it *Buffy*-style. Before deciding whether to sell the council's contract for gravedigging, they held a public consultation meeting. But council taxpayers weren't impressed that it was to be held after dark in a chapel of rest at a local cemetery. Nevertheless 50 of them turned up to protest... and were duly ignored by the council which sold off the service anyway.

LOSING FAITH

LAST May Labour lost control of Lambeth to a Lib Dem/Tory administration. Since then the relationship between chief executive Faith Boardman and her new bosses has grown fraught.

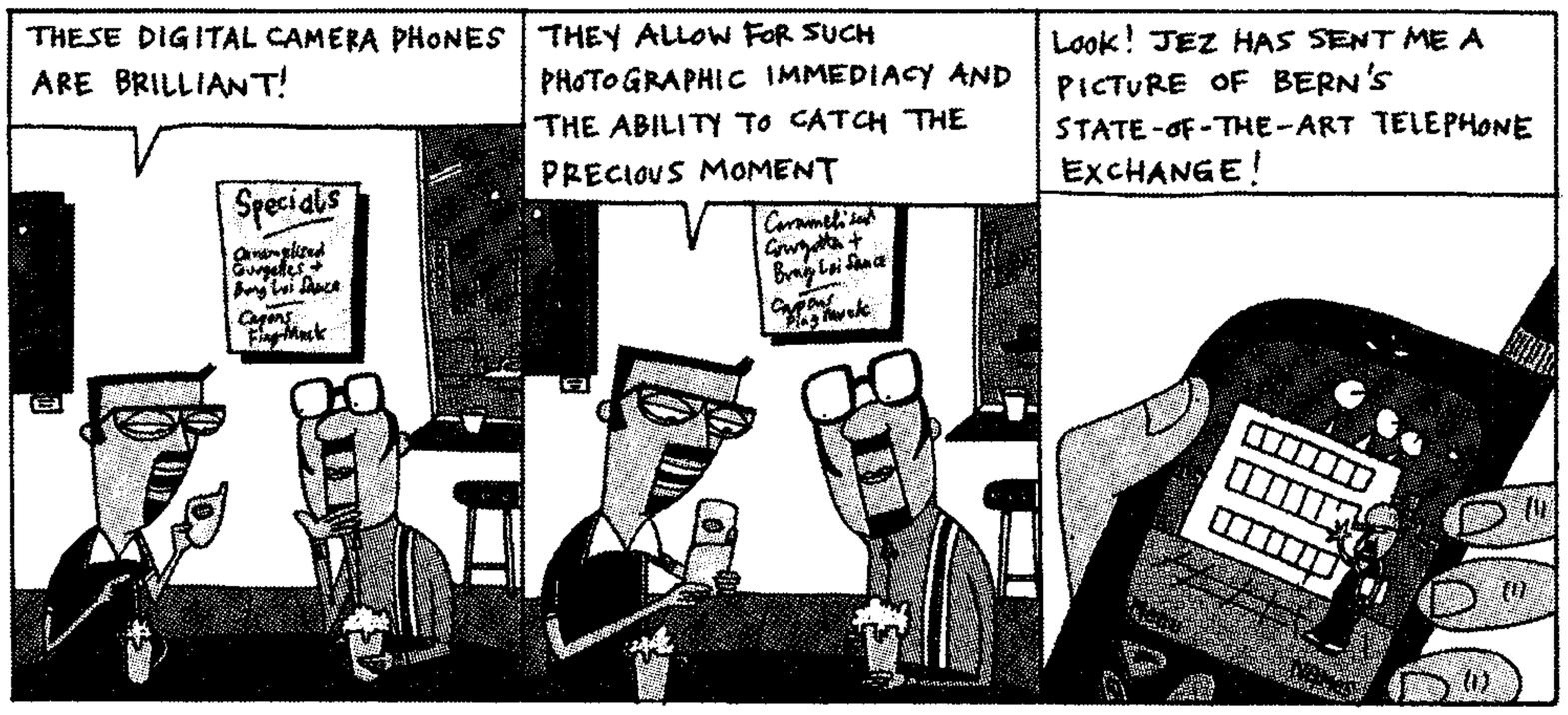
Although the new regime has so far balked at paying Boardman off as the cost would be astronomical (£160,000-a-year makes her England's highest paid local authority chief exec), it is dropping some pretty heavy hints.

On her return from holiday in Madeira Boardman was told that the budget for the chief executive's office was to be cut by £1m in an effort to balance the books. District auditor Les Kidner had warned that Lambeth had overspent by £32m in less than a year. On her appointment in 2000 Boardman declared that she would make the financial stability of Lambeth one of her two top priorities. The other was to improve services, just as she claimed to have done in her previous job as chief of the, er, child support agency. Alas, new figures from the local government ombudsman show that in 2002 Lambeth had more complaints upheld against it for poor service than all the other south London boroughs put together.

● MEMBERS and officers from Isle of Wight council who attended a planning committee training day in March had their priorities right. A report to the committee this week lists what was good about the day. First on the list was, er, lunch, followed in fourth place by relief that there was no prying press presence. Thirteenth out of 21 items was discussion about... planning.

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER


THESE DIGITAL CAMERA PHONES ARE BRILLIANT!
Specials
THEY ALLOW FOR SUCH PHOTOGRAPHIC IMMEDIACY AND THE ABILITY TO CATCH THE PRECIOUS MOMENT
LOOK! JEZ HAS SENT ME A PICTURE OF BERN'S STATE-OF-THE-ART TELEPHONE EXCHANGE!

EDUCASHUN NEWZ

WHEN Peter Ridsdale was appointed chairman of Education Leeds – the partnership with Crapita charged with "running" the city's schools – he was unencumbered with any previous experience of educational matters (*Eyes passim*). But then Ridsdale could do no wrong on account of the success he had made of his day job as chairman of Leeds United.

Back in 2001, when United were flying high in the premiership and champions league, "Publicity Pete" was constantly in the media spouting about quality, presenting awards and giving motivational speeches. But as United slithered down the league to flirt with relegation, Ridsdale's public profile went south too.

Vilified by fans and under pressure from shareholders, he resigned as club chairman in March having run up debts of £79m despite selling many of the best players. He stepped down from the board in April and severed all connections with the club.

Teachers, parents and pupils are now asking why a man deemed unfit to run a football club is still in charge of the city's schools and in receipt of a large but undisclosed salary. Given that he was appointed by the education secretary to run an "arm's length" partnership between the council and Crapita, nobody is even sure whose job it is to get rid of him.

SO FAREWELL and good riddance to construction firm WS Atkins, which is pulling out of its contract to provide Southwark's education service three years early after admitting it can't make a profit from the £100m contract.

Atkins took over the education department two years ago after the government said the number of schools in "special measures" in the London borough was unacceptably high. But the writing appeared on the wall in February when, with the number of schools in special measures greater than ever, Southwark's headteachers wrote to the department for education expressing their complete lack of confidence in Atkins.

This followed an abysmal 2002, during which Southwark primary schools came bottom of national league tables and the firm imposed redundancies and a recruitment freeze (*Eye* 1069). Within a week of the heads' letter, Atkins was forced to admit that the budgets it had allocated to schools for the new financial year were wrong, in some cases by as much as £200,000.

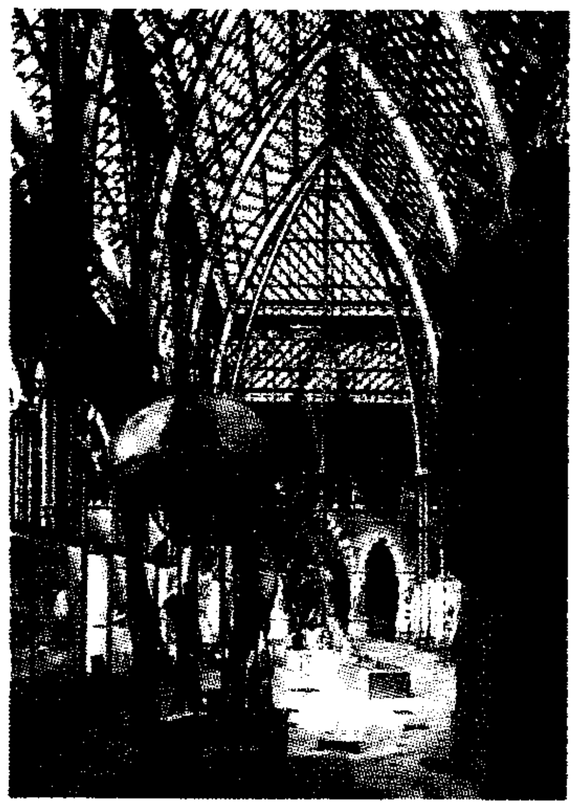
Warballs

"Owners of a model village said yesterday they had been forced to delay opening after insurers would not provide cover 'because of a heightened threat from terrorism'. Families will not be able to watch locomotives steam round the 1.5 acres of the miniature landscape at Model Railway Village, Southport, because of the terrorist risk, said owner Ray Jones." — *Western Morning News*.

NOOKS and CORNERS

THE Oxford Museum, properly the Oxford University Museum of Physical Sciences, is one of the best and most enjoyable products of the Gothic Revival. What a shame there are plans to disfigure it.

Inspired by the writings of John Ruskin and wonderfully representative of the scientific and religious debates of its time, it was built in 1855-60 and designed by the firm of Deane & Woodward; that is, by the brilliant young Irish architect, Benjamin Woodward. Its Venetian Gothic arcades are rich in naturalistic carving, with each shaft made didactically of a different marble. And over the central quadrangle is an astonishing spiky Gothic iron and glass roof made by the quirky Francis Skidmore, of Coventry, "the best English craftsman in iron, as Pevsner observed; "he received £5,000 for it and deserved every penny".



It creates a glazed court (so much more useful and intelligent than the Great Court of the British Museum which was never meant to be covered by My Lord Foster's silly glass doughnut). Unfortunately the Oxford roof now leaks, which naturally disturbs the curators responsible for the prehistoric skeletons and stuffed animals in their cases below.

The obvious answer is to repair it, but that is not a sexy enough solution for the university surveyor's department which has come up with the brilliant wheeze of building a brand new roof above the existing one. This will be of a lightweight "translucent covering" of ethylene tetrafluoroethylene (ETFE) foil, as used on the Eden Project domes in Cornwall, supported on steel struts fixed to the inner brick walls.

Although it will not be visible from the green in front of the museum, this structure will nevertheless disfigure one of the most famous and representative buildings of the Victorian Age and make Skidmore's triumph redundant.

The Victorian Society has objected and the eminent consulting engineer Brian Morton has reported that it is perfectly possible to repair the existing roof by taking off all the remarkable big glass tiles (laid diamond-fashion) and refixing them, perhaps with neoprene gaskets to ensure they are watertight. Furthermore, it is perfectly possible to manufacture new glass tiles to replace any which may be broken. Morton points out that repairing the existing, amazing roof will probably be cheaper than erecting a new one on top. He also notes that ETFE, unlike old-fashioned glass, has a limited life. Not that that need be a problem: no doubt when the second roof eventually fails, the university surveyors' department will erect another new roof above that.

'Piloti'

AD NAUSEAM

LIKE their flights, Ryanair's advertising is cheap. Unlike most advertisers, who shrank into their shells during the war, Ryanair published several desperately clumsy spoofs. Last week it even latched on to the war's most boring "joke" by showing Muhammad Saeef al-Sahaf, aka Comical Ali, claiming "Easyjet have the lowest fares".

As with EasyJet (whose copied ad highlighted in *Eye 1078* has drawn an official complaint from *The Economist*), Ryanair does its advertising in-house and it shows. In the UK, its advertising has been investigated by the Advertising Standards Authority no fewer than 16 times in the last four years in response to complaints about questionable claims, misleading offers and smutty taglines.

On the odd occasion it has branched out from simple price comparisons, its attempts at humour have generally misfired – from calling BA "Expensive BA*****S" in 1999 to a pair of 2001 Valentine's Day specials in the *Evening Standard* headlined "BLOW ME! (These fares are hard to swallow!)" and "SATISFACTION GUARANTEED!" In the latter case, each featured two pairs of feet, one on top of the other. The flights cost £69. What fun parents must have had explaining that one.

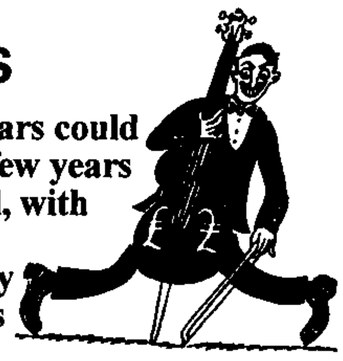
Ryanair has also ruffled a few feathers abroad. In Germany a comparative advertising case brought by Lufthansa rumbles on interminably; while in Belgium Ryanair laid into the national carrier Sabena with a picture of the famously naff "Mannekin Pis" statue of a boy weeing. "Pissed off with Sabena's high fares?" it quipped. Like most people with a mental age in double-figures, the Belgian courts didn't find this very funny and Ryanair lost a subsequent legal action brought by Sabena.

On the back of impressive profits, Ryanair has always maintained that it ain't broke, so why fix it? One answer would be that it *is* broke. Last week Ryanair was forced to extend the Easter Sale advertised in the Comical Ali push, due to lack of public interest. We may not be as stupid as they think.

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH

MUSIC & MUSICIANS



NO ONE with eyes or ears could disagree that for the past few years the LSO has been on a roll, with the best management, the best funding and (generally speaking) the best concerts of any British orchestra.

But in its rise to glory it has become a juggernaut, with an alarmingly aggressive marketing campaign that seems set on turning London's concert world into a private fiefdom. The latest evidence is a plan of action for the orchestra's forthcoming centenary that detached observers (ie the other four symphony orchestras in the capital) might regard as fixing the press.

It has contracted the main music correspondent for the *Times* to write its official history. It has hatched a deal with the Machiavellian Norman Lebrecht, arts overseer of the *Evening Standard*, for the *Standard* to become its "official media partner" – which means, among other things, that LSO concerts come endorsed by the paper's principal music writer. And if that weren't enough, it has also fixed year-long promotional deals with Classic FM (which will "recommend" LSO concerts throughout the centenary season), with *Classic FM Magazine* (for supportive coverage "on a regular basis") and with Radio 3 (for similar favours).

Everyone involved in this centenary love-in will justify it as a celebration of the LSO's achievement. But it means the general public will be hard-pushed to find even vaguely objective evaluations of what the orchestra is up to in the next 12 months. Can we expect to find serious criticism of an LSO performance in the *Standard*? Or the *Times*? Or on the radio? Unlikely. And an inevitable consequence is that, attempting to redress the balance, the other London orchestras will be looking for "official media partners" of their own. If they succeed, we'll end up with a situation where each paper backs its own musicians. What hope then for unbiased concert coverage?

THERE'S trouble brewing for the *Cardiff Singer of the World* competition, which had its London launch the other week at an event that doubled as a promotional platform for Cardiff's bid to be European Capital of Culture 2008.

The city's mayor supplied a bullish speech. Culture secretary Tessa Jowell gave encouragement. And no one chose to comment on the awkward fact that Cardiff's role in this prestigious competition has in fact been sidelined. With a change of name. It's henceforth to be known as *BBC Singer of the World in Cardiff* – a name so long that it will inevitably be contracted, with no prizes for guessing what gets dropped. When asked, a rattled Cardiff spokesperson insisted this wouldn't happen, and referred enquirers to the competition website. Title of the website? www.bbc.co.uk/singeroftheworld

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

O·B·N·K

At the Saatchi Gallery, it becomes clear that Hirst is neither a joke nor a poseur, but the real thing. In centuries to come, he will be seen as important an artist as Bacon and Freud – perhaps even the great Turner. Give this gallery a chance and go to see the collection several times. If you do, you will come to understand that Charles Saatchi has given us giants.

BONNIE GREER
Night and Day Magazine

Submitted by J. James.

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

Letters

Exam failures

Sir,

Re: GCSE examiners. How right you are that experienced and senior teachers have no enthusiasm for marking exam scripts. On hearing that I am marking GCSE papers, such teachers have shuddered in horror.

Ken Boston is to be encouraged in his quest to sack 40 (yes 40!) managers from his exam quango (The Independent, recently). What on earth were they doing, apart from creating work for each other? Mr Boston seems to have quit deriding the current system as a cottage industry, too. Someone must have explained to him the cost of renting, insuring and securing – 24/7 for a couple of months – marking centres, plus the vulnerability of centres to sabotage. Then add expenses for examiners, eg travel, maybe baby-sitters, for every visit.

Apart from the money, the only attraction of marking is its being done in the comfort and convenience of one's home.

Yours sincerely,
EXAMINER AND SUPPLY TEACHER.

In hot water

Sir,

Mowlem is surprised and disappointed by the latest comments from some members of the Bath & North East Somerset Council (Rotten Boroughs, Eye 1077), particularly since there is nothing to suggest the comments reflect the views of the council as a whole. We are further perplexed that the comments should come at a time when Mowlem and BANES are working extremely closely together to achieve a speedy and successful hand-over of the Bath Spa project.

In the spirit of this collaboration, Mowlem has remained silent over many weeks as some members of the council have levelled groundless accusations regarding our performance on the project. We now feel obliged to put the record straight in order to protect our reputation.

The delay in delivering the project has principally resulted from inconsistencies and a lack of detail in the project's design specification, allied to a series of failings inherent in the processes and procedures established for managing the project from the client's side. We could point to any number of instances where this has led to significant delay.

CHRIS PAPE,
Mowlem Regional Director.

Dangerous liaison?

Sir,

I understand from the pandemic of articles about SARS that it is extremely dangerous to meet with people from the East at present without wearing a face mask.

Do you happen to have any pictures of westerners casually consorting with Eastern-looking people which might perhaps serve to illustrate the dangers?

Regards,
ADRIAN GREEMAN,
Via email.

Do not adjust your set

Sir,

I am writing regarding issue 1078, page 9, the third paragraph, about the Saddam statues being toppled.

What you report did happen, but you do not tell the full story. I watched the broadcast in question: after what you report happened, Nicholas Owen IMMEDIATELY said that they accidentally showed the wrong one, then IMMEDIATELY apologised, then IMMEDIATELY showed the correct one.

Regards,
ALASTAIR GREEN,
Via email.

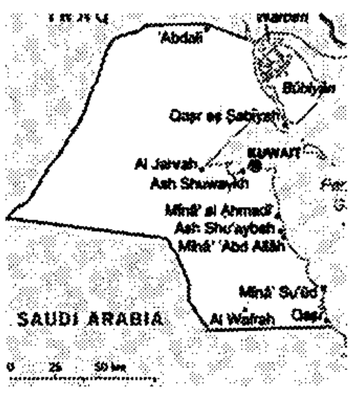
Bosom of his family

Sir,

Samer Nashef's letter prompted me to look at some family papers to check that the use of "balcony" to refer to an ample bosom is not exclusively French. It was said of one of the mistresses of George IV: "How extraordinary when the object (of love) is Lady Conyngham. Not an idea in her head; not a word to say for herself; nothing but a hand to accept pearls and diamonds and an enormous balcony to wear them on." Perhaps in the nearly two centuries since those days, the expression has fallen out of use here.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE BIRD,
Edinburgh.

Lookalike



Vader

Kuwait

Sir,

Am I alone in detecting a marked similarity between the country of Kuwait and cosmic villain, the Sith Lord Darth Vader?

I wonder if they are perhaps related...

Yours sincerely,
ROBIN WILTON,
Via email.

Bath and wails

Sir,

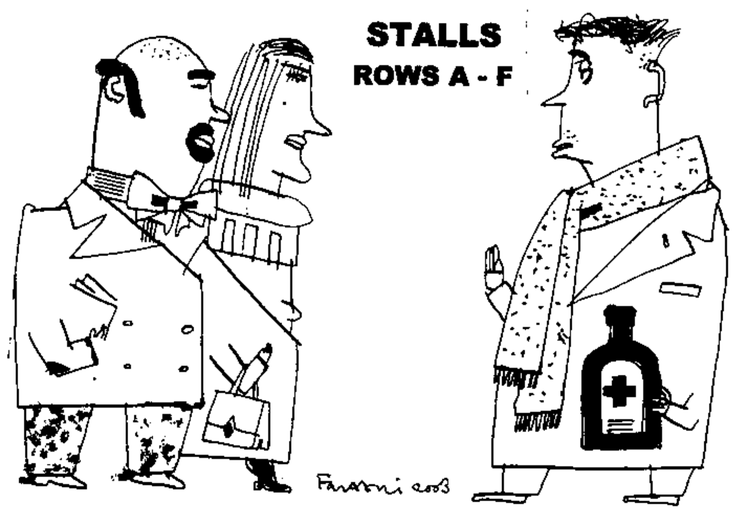
In your piece (Literary Review, 18 April) about myself and my publishing company Artnik you make a number of sneering comments, which is your rag's style as well as your prerogative. I pass on those, although I find it odd that despite not talking to me your reporter attributes quotes to me. However, you make one factual allegation concerning the editing of the Marquess of Bath's memoirs: "Artnik parted company with [an editor] halfway through volume three, after the hack had the cheek to present his bill – which remains unpaid."

The hack in question was paid for one stint of editing but put on office [sic] that his work was not up to scratch. When he again fell below par, he was sacked and not paid. There are voluminous emails covering this issue. The hack was also invited to take us to the small claims court. He declined to do so.

If your own hack had followed basic journalist procedures, he would have put this allegation to either myself or my husband, John McVicar, and discovered the facts for himself. He did not do so, probably because he was too eager to find some substance for his sneering.

VALENTINA ARTSRUNIK,
Via email.

Scenes You Seldom See



"It will be better if I don't come – I've got a terrible cough"

Friendly ire

Sir,

Re: Literary Review, 1078. I don't want to be boring (ok, yes I do), but fascinated with militaria as Lee Child may be, he doesn't know his ammunition. While his description of the effect of APFSDS is generally correct, his understanding of its propulsion isn't. The ammunition is propelled only by the explosive charge when it is initially fired, not by any "little rocket motor".

Regards,
RICHARD CAMPBELL-JONES,
Via email.

Dewar lament

Sir,

Whatever Piloti's expertise in architecture and buildings, this expertise does not appear to extend to matters political or religious.

*In his article (1078) he refers in paragraph 1 to "the late **unlamented** Donald Dewar". What justification does he/she have for that claim? I don't know to whom Piloti spoke on this matter but I can assure you that Donald Dewar is very much missed by me and by my friends. It may have been intended as a humorous aside but I found it offensive.*

*We later read that the architect, F.T. Pilkington, was "perhaps the only Gothic Revival architect to come to terms with the requirements of **Noncomformist** congregations". What relevance did this have to his later comments on the Barclay Church in Edinburgh or Trinity Church in Irvine? Both these churches belong(ed) to the Church of Scotland – as Piloti does mention in respect of Trinity Church. They were thus both serving parishes within the Established Church so, by definition, were not nonconformist.*

Yours,
JOHN J MONAGHAN,
Bramhall, Stockport.

● *Piloti writes: Well, I don't lament Dewar. He gave us the Scottish parliament and rigged the competition to get the hugely expensive building nobody asked for or wants.*

But, mea culpa, I should NOT have said "nonconformist" – that was a stupid English mistake; I should have said "Protestant". Not thinking straight: sorry. Though, in fact, your correspondent is WRONG: both the Trinity Church in Irvine and the Barclay Church in Edinburgh were built for Free Church congregations after the Free Church had split from the Church of Scotland, so neither was originally built for the established church in Scotland. So yah boo sucks to clever Mr Monaghan.

Nubile phone technology

Sir,

Boffin needn't worry about the 3G mobile phone companies (Eye 1078). The first one to break ranks and provide tiny, pixelated images of live pornography will make a fortune.

GEOFF LANE,
Bury.

Knocking shop

Sir,

With reference to your correspondence on "Knock Down Ginger", I recall my father relating his childhood version of the prank called "String Up Knockers".

As the doors of the terraced houses in Rotherhithe where he lived were close to each other, he and his accomplices would tie neighbouring heavy door knockers together with a length of string and knock on one door, and then hide. As the door was opened and then closed, the next door knocker would fall and summon their neighbour, and so on, much to the delight of the children who hoped for continual repetition.

He said it was the only game they understood.

Regards,
BRIAN LEEDHAM,
West Ewell, Surrey.

Sir,

Mr Twyford (Letters, 1077) may be interested to know, that in the West Midlands, the children's game of knocking doors and running away was called "Rat a Tat Ginger."

Apparently, "Ginger" managed to breed with "Shit Finger Dick" (Letters, 1078) to spawn an unchristened game, where a dog turd was wrapped in a sheet of newspaper and placed on the victim's doorstep. The newspaper was then set on fire prior to knocking the door and running away. The householder would answer the door, see the fire and stamp on it to put it out with inevitable hilarious consequences.

Ho Ho Ho.
J SWINDEN,
Via email.

Sir,

During World War II we children on the Home Front developed our own weapons of mass destruction in the door-knocking war effort.

It was the custom to place in the streets large dustbins into which the patriotically-minded were encouraged to put kitchen waste so that it could be collected and used as pig swill. In the hot summer months these so-called pig bins became fetid cauldrons of rotting, malodorous filth, seething with flies and vermin.

It was a regular innocent childish prank carefully to prop a brimming bin of such swill against someone's front door and then knock and run away. When the householder opened the door, the hallway would be inundated with a torrent of putrescence as the bin toppled into the house.

It was in such simple ways that morale was maintained and our British sense of fun was kept alive in those dark days.

Yours sincerely,
CLIVE WRIGHT,
London SW1.

Sir,

What concerns me is the practice of knocking on doors and not running away. This is called "Jehovah's Witness".

MEG KNOTT,
London N14.

Lookalike

Al-Assad

Darling

Sir,

I'd just like to say how disappointed I was to hear former World War I patriot Captain Darling criticise the Allied operation to free the Iraqis now that he's become president of Syria. Didn't Melchett teach him anything? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
S. TOWNSEND,
London.

Path of righteousness

Sir,

Franklin Lee, who doesn't like seeing people enjoy themselves on a public path near his property (1078), needs to learn a few things. The path will have been there for much longer than he has, if his solicitor didn't spot it in the search when he acquired the property he should get a new solicitor, and public paths are highways just like any road, the surface of which belongs to the council not to Mr Lee.

KATE ASHBROOK,
General Secretary, The Open Spaces Society.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"I'll never set foot on a snooker table again..."
MARK KING, BBC2
(Ian Millican)

"The problem is dead in the water unless something is pulled out of the fire."
BRIAN ROWAN, BBC Radio Ulster
(George McCally)

"He's hanging on by the thread of his fingertips."
JAY ROACH, Radio 5 Live
(Nick Bradbury)

"He should have felt he probably scored then."
TREVOR BROOKING, BBC2
(Tom Fitz-Hugh)

"To speak to a travel adviser, press 2. Otherwise your call will be transferred to a travel adviser."
London Travel Information Line
(Jonathan Robinson)

Poetic thanks

Sir,

I've tried to imitate your inimitable style in a poem of thanks:

So, thank you then
E.J. Thribb
Poet, miniaturist
And precise obituarist.

For Fritz's poem
I give you thanks
And with my sobs
I fill my hanks.

I.F. Spiegl (Widow)

Yours most sincerely,
INGRID SPIEGL,
Liverpool.

Withering riposte

Sir,

Judging from Alan Claque's charming anagrams of my name (Eye 1077), he not only knows I exist, but must surely have met me.

Is he, I wonder, A.Q. Anal-Clue, Cyclops' nemesis? I think we should work it out for ourselves.

Yours faithfully,
GAYNOR WITHERS,
Cumbria.

Looks familiar

Sir,

After the Times failed to pay Private Eye for its number-crunching feature, I was wondering whether the Eye had spotted another rip-off in a separate publication.

Sure enough, there is a Lookalikes section in the Radio Times letters page. Has the Eye been paid for this idea?

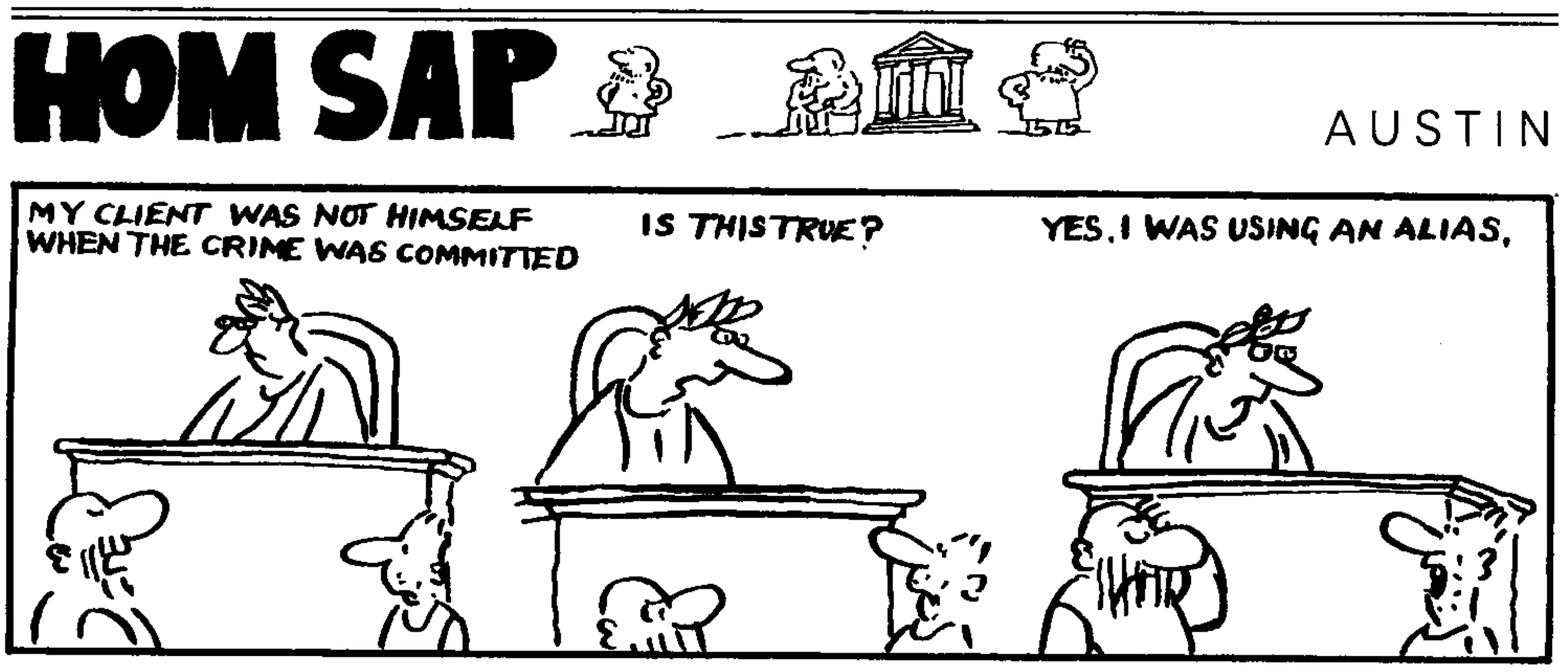
Yours,
THOMAS LAMB,
Via email.

Sir,

After the letter last week exposing the Times's appropriation of your "Number Crunching" feature, I was interested to note that the Indie appears to have paraphrased Madame Polly Filler in the guise of their new "columnist" Denisella (!) Brown. Surely some recompense must be due?

Well, at least you can feel pleasure at inspiring journalists from all corners of London.

Yours,
LAWRENCE AGGLETON,
Bath.



Letter from **Washington**

from Our Own Correspondent

BARRING death by pretzel, 18 months from now George Dubya Bush will be celebrating the prospect of another four years in the White House, so completing another chapter in the unfinished business of the Bush family.

Although getting rid of Saddam was high on Dubya's "list of things to do whilst president", the importance of winning back-to-back presidential races has topped the Bush family agenda ever since 1992, when Bush Snr was defeated after only one term by Bill Clinton.

This time round Dubya's camp expects to win next year's presidential race no matter who the Democrat opponent – and certainly without any repeat of the unseemly shenanigans witnessed in Florida last time. The reasons behind this Republican bullishness are part based on polling data, which show Dubya enjoying the best long-term polling figures of any American president since 1938.

Yes, he's overseen a calamitous slump in our economy and the unmasking as crooks of many of our once-celebrated captains of industry. But while such gloom may have made a difference in the past, since 11 September we've been at war. Unlike his daddy, who stopped at the Iraqi border, Dubya finished off Saddam, a victory to make us all proud (60 percent of us own up to displaying the Stars and Stripes). And there are still evil terrorists whom we must fight.

Dubya's re-election team is confident of angling its pitch to the electorate so that a vote for any other candidate will be seen as something akin to an unpatriotic act. Added to this heady mix are the problems the Democrats face trying to find a candidate who can even pass muster. The current frontrunner, Senator John Kerry, is said to be so wooden he makes Al Gore look human.

The spoils of war aren't, however, an issue. Here in Washington it seems straightforward enough: we took the major risk in waging war, bore the biggest cost, so we've earned whatever we can get out of it. If you Brits pick up a few crumbs for your help, then good on you. So why the big deal about the contracts for reconstruction being awarded to firms with links to the likes of Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld? What did you expect?

The only cloud on the horizon in the short term is how to stop the Iraqi people exercising their new-found freedom and electing the wrong kind of people. The worst-case scenario is an extreme Islamist government which sees Uncle Sam not as a benevolent force but an abomination and enemy of Allah. How ungrateful can you get?

Still, by the time we get around to letting the Iraqi people elect their own government, the four new US military bases planned for what is sure to be a showcase for Arab democracy will have been built and secured – adding to our portfolio of bases across the globe in 41 countries across the five continents.

So, with 2004 in the bag as far as Dubya and his team are concerned, the only real question left is who gets the title in 2008? It won't be dodgy old hands like Cheney or Rumsfeld; and Republicans hardly seem ready for the likes of Colin Powell or Condoleezza Rice. So who will it be?

Favourite to win at present are the Democrats in the form of one Hillary Clinton, who wisely decided to back away from challenging Dubya next year. Which raises the intriguing prospect that were she to be successful (or how about Jebb Bush for the Republicans?) in 2008 and then win a second term, two families will have ruled the most powerful nation on the planet for 28 uninterrupted years between them. Ain't democracy grand?

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

● "Why is Radio Swaziland lying to the nation?" MP Jojo Dlamini demanded of Information Minister Mntomzima Dlamini in the House of Assembly in Mbabane. "Why are they lying to us that their reporter is in Iraq, covering the war, when I have seen him here in Swaziland, broadcasting his eye-witness reports out of a broom closet?"

Jojo Dlamini was demanding answers after Phesheya Dube (Radio Swaziland's "man in Baghdad") was spotted in the Swazi capital, when he was supposed to be in Iraq. "We are in a state of shock," declared the station's news anchorman, Moses Matsebula, "because we all thought he was in Baghdad, watching the bombs falling. It's incredible, because he was phoning in his reports twice each day, and describing the attacks in great detail. So much so that I became concerned for his wellbeing, and often advised him on-air to find a cave somewhere to be safe from missiles. Our station even agreed to pay him for a flak jacket and an old WWII gas mask that he told us he'd bought in Baghdad market. Yet all along it seems that he was here in the broom closet in Mbabane, where he kept some sound effects records, and making it all up from what he had seen on CNN. We had no idea about what he was up to, but I confess that it is a blow to the credibility of our war coverage."

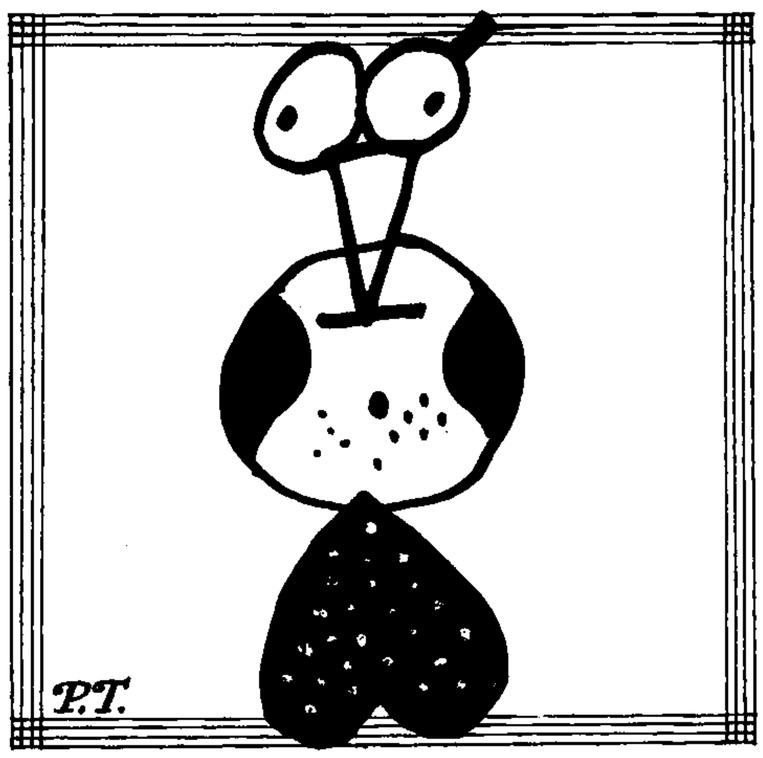
The Information Minister promised to investigate the matter, and to report back to the House. *(Swazi Observer, 31/3/03. Spotter: Michael Mullane)*

— ● —

● *"This sort of practice is a direct breach of National Food Safety Standard laws," a spokeswoman for the New South Wales Health department told reporters in Sydney, "and those laws are something that all restaurants must abide by. Clause 15 clearly states that food handlers must take all practicable measures to ensure their body does not contaminate food, and must prevent unnecessary physical contact with ready-to-eat dishes. And I would suggest that what is going on in these restaurants clearly infringes those regulations."*

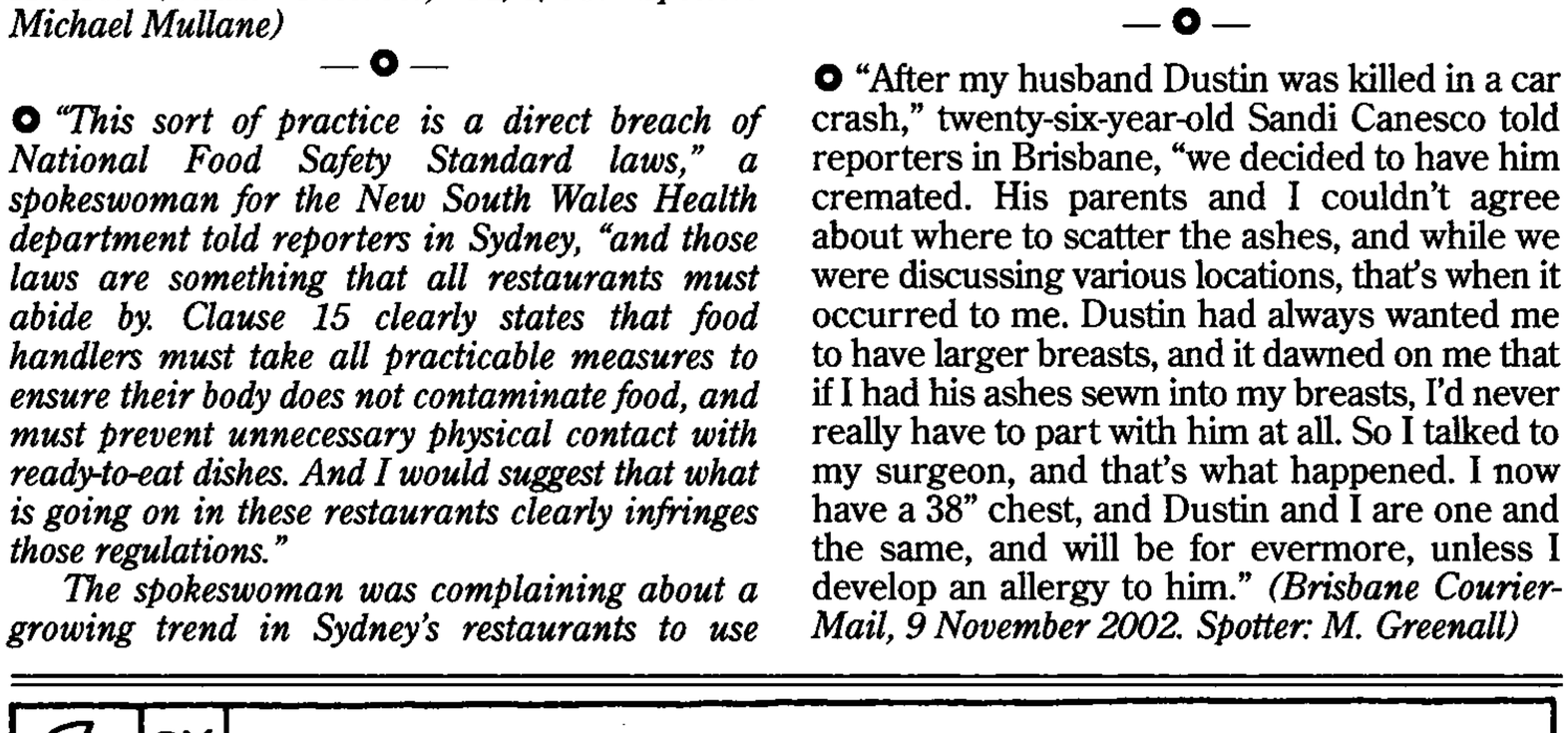
The spokeswoman was complaining about a growing trend in Sydney's restaurants to use naked waitresses as female plates, off which customers can eat. The city's Tokyo House restaurant offers "traditional Japanese cuisine, such as sushi and sashimi, served from the erogenous zones of a female human plate," while a spokesman for The Governor's Pleasure restaurant in Erskine Street goes even further. "We offer a full a la carte menu," said the manager, "followed by a $50 dessert, which consists of a seductive waitress feeding diners from parts of her naked body. The diner gets to eat strawberries out of her anus, some ice cream off her breasts, and to lick chopped nuts out of her belly button, or somewhere like that. It lasts about fifteen minutes, and it's all good clean fun."

However, the NSW Health department remains outraged at such behaviour. "Hygiene must be paramount at all times," the spokeswoman warned. "Restaurants can receive a $2750 fine and lose 25 penalty points for any breach of food safety regulations. And if it is further found that a business has sold food that was unfit for consumption or caused illness, the penalty is a further $5500 fine." (The Sun-Herald, 16/3/03. Spotter: Norm Reynolds)



— ● —

● "After my husband Dustin was killed in a car crash," twenty-six-year-old Sandi Canesco told reporters in Brisbane, "we decided to have him cremated. His parents and I couldn't agree about where to scatter the ashes, and while we were discussing various locations, that's when it occurred to me. Dustin had always wanted me to have larger breasts, and it dawned on me that if I had his ashes sewn into my breasts, I'd never really have to part with him at all. So I talked to my surgeon, and that's what happened. I now have a 38" chest, and Dustin and I are one and the same, and will be for evermore, unless I develop an allergy to him." *(Brisbane Courier-Mail, 9 November 2002. Spotter: M. Greenall)*



ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Field Marshal the Very Rev. A.R.P. Blair DSO

Hullo!

With the memory of Easter still fresh in our minds, the cries of "Allelulia" fading on the air, it grieves me to say that I still hear around the parish odd voices of doubt and disbelief.

"It's all very well, Vicar," they say, "but where are those 'weapons of mass destruction' that you told us Satan was preparing to unleash?"

Well, for goodness sake, there's no pleasing some people, is there?

"Show us the weapons," they cry, "and we will believe!"

Doesn't that ring a few bells from scripture?

And what was the reply? For those of you with short memories, let me remind you! The reply came loud and clear, echoing down the ages, "Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed!".

You see, it's that simple! I don't want to get too heavy and theological here, but this is an important point which all the doubters have really got to start taking on board!

Just because you can't see something, it doesn't mean that it doesn't exist.

Isn't that the whole basis of our faith?

I remember when we were all starting out on our journey, a lot of people used to ask, "What is this Third Way that you keep telling us about, Vicar? We can't see it."

But, hey, don't those people look silly now, when everyone now realises that it was there all along!

If people hadn't been so visually impaired (no offence to Mr Blunkett!), they would have recognised it right from the start, instead of acting like a lot of Doubting Thomases!

And what about all the wonderful improvements we've been making in the parish – to our schools and hospitals?

People say that they can't see these either. But we all know they exist, and that we have every right to be proud of them!

And sometimes the opposite is true, isn't it? People see things which aren't there, like all this crime that's supposed to be on the streets, that we know perfectly well doesn't really exist.

So where does that leave us? I'll tell you where. We all have to believe that those weapons of mass destruction exist just as we have to "believe" all the other articles of our faith.

In fact, I'm going to suggest that at our family worship this week we say a slightly amended version of the Creed, to come just before we give each other the sign of war:

"We believe in the Weapons of Mass Destruction, Visible or Invisible..." and

then continue as usual.

So, let's have an end to all this negative in-putting, shall we? Let the Good News go out loud and clear this Eastertide.

"Our enemy Satan is o'erthrown," (or overthrown, as we say now!)

There has been a regime change in Hell! Rejoice! Rejoice! *(The Little Book of Gloats).*

Yours in victory,

Tony

NEW FROM THE PARISH BOOKSTALL

My friend Sir Peter Stoddart has written a remarkable account of life at the vicarage during the recent hectic days of the campaign against Evilitude.

Peter has now produced a really first-class little book called 'Fight The Good Fight' (The OBN Press).

At the beginning, I said to him, "Hey, Peter, I want you to tell it like it is. Warts and all."

And after it was all over and he had finished, you know what he said? "Vicar, I tried, but I just couldn't find any warts at all."

Isn't it refreshing to have someone writing honestly for a change?

Copies available from Mr Mandelson, who will be delivering them to you personally where you live. T.B.

A Notice Of Impending Excommunication

■ Parishioners are hereby informed that Mr George Galloway, who has been a member of our church for years, is now facing the very real responsibility of excommunication. In our last newsletter it was reported that Mr Galloway was actively practising Satanism and worshipping the Evil One. We asked you all to pray for him but, sadly, our prayers have not been answered. It has now been brought to our notice that Mr Galloway has been accused of selling his soul to the Devil for 300 million barrels of oil.

If these allegations turn out to be true (and we must all give Mr Galloway the benefit of the doubt until he is proved guilty!), then it would clearly be the duty of the church authorities to banish Mr Galloway into outer darkness and to remove his name from the church's electoral roll. If, on the other hand, by some amazing stroke of luck, it turns out that George gets away with it (again!), then of course we will have to reconsider our position with regard to this one! T.B.

Women's Groups

Mrs Booth QC gave a most interesting talk about "How To Live Well On £0 A Day". She described how she had travelled to Australia free of charge and then gone shopping at a large Mall where she helped herself to anything she wanted without paying!

"People say the cost of living has gone up," she said. "But it really is possible to live on £0 a day."

There were tea and biscuits (£2.50) and then Ms Caplin, Mrs Booth's friend, came round with a hat suggesting a voluntary donation of £10 for the speaker's expenses.

Thought For The Week

FROM THE VICAR

Now that the war has ended, it is time to think of those who suffered most during those dark days. Those who risked everything for the cause of peace. I am thinking here of myself (and certainly not Mr Straw or Mr Blunkett!!).

Let me tell you, at the darkest hour I gathered my loved ones about me, even little Leo, and told them that my hour had possibly come and that I might lose everything that was dear to me. My job. It would have been oh so easy to have given up. But, no. I soldiered on, or rather others did the soldiering and I went on. I am sure there is a lesson there for everyone! T.B.

Prayer Aid

This thoughtful portrait of the vicar has helped countless parishioners through their problems and some even claimed it has miraculous healing powers.

If you would like a meditation card with this recent portrait of the vicar, please write to our parish photographer Mr Rankin at Happy Snaps, The Old Photo Booth, On St Albions Station, enclosing a s.a.e. and £5000.

WITNESS WANTED

It has been reported to me that there was a nasty incident recently outside the Garrick Arms when our local solicitor Mr Lairg, emerging from the pub, began shouting insults at a passing blind man, the Head of Neighbourhood Watch Mr Blunkett, accusing him of being "an interfering old nanny" and telling him to "take his nose out of other people's business". Will anyone who saw this incident please keep quiet about it as this unseemly incident might otherwise reflect rather badly on two of the most respected members of our parish team. T.B.

Parish Postbag

Dear Vicar,

I am writing as a Governor of The St Albion Primary School to protest at the inadequate funding of this year's budget. Thanks to you, Vicar, and your empty promises, our kids are being deprived of

Yours sincerely,
Fiona Millar.

The Editor writes: All letters from my partner may be cut for reasons of trying to keep my job. A.C.

GLENDA SLAGG

FLEET STREET'S ANSWER TO XXX!!?!?

■ SI SI! The Spanish will take El Becks and La Posho to their hearts when the sexy soccer icon goes a-prancin' and a-dancin' around the pitch in Madrid?!?! "Golé!" they'll shout (geddit?) at the top of their bullfighting voices when the Beautiful Game is played by the Beautiful Guy!?!? They'll go Really Mad-rid (geddit?!) for our Soccer Royalty, the Prince of Goals and the Princess of Spice!?!

■ TRAITOR!?! (And I don't mean George Galloway!?!?) That's the only word to describe the snivelling nancy-boy Beckham, who is skulking off to get his filthy hands on some Spanish Gold!?! Gerroff – and take your skinny fashion victim of a wife and your kids with the silly names with you!?!? Go to El!?! (Geddit?!) The greasy paella-guzzling gauchos are welcome to you!?!?!

■ *SEEN Liz Hurley's lips?!?!? OK, so she looks like something out of the Saatchi Gallery!?! Who cares!! She's still the loveliest gal in town – even if she does look like a trout that has had its lips blown up with a bicycle pump!*

■ MAJOR Ingram – give that man a medal!?!? At least he had the guts to take on the greedy Chris Tarrant and the money-grubbing moguls of ITV?!?!

OK, so he cheated!?! Who wouldn't in this day and age – especially when there's a million quid at stake!!?!

So hats off to the Major and his mad missus for the crazy coughin' that's given us something to smile about before we all die from SARS?!?!?

■ *SO CAMILLA Parker Bowles is moving into the Queen Mum's old house!?!? What a nerve!?! The old lady is scarcely cold in the grave before Old Horseface is trying to steal her furniture!?!?*

Shame on you, Charles!?! It's Camilla who should be tried for treason – not Gorgeous George Galloway, the Scottish heartthrob with his tasty Middle Eastern delicacy on his arm!?!? Mmmm!?!?!

■ HERE THEY ARE – Glenda's May-Day Munchkins!?!

● **Tariq Aziz** – You can come and have a ziz round my place, big boy!?! And don't forget to bring round your weapon of mass destruction!?!?

● **Tecwen Whittock** – Crazy name, crazy cough!?!?

Byeeee!!!

GNOME PLC
The Chairman's Statement

EGGED ON by a hysterical media campaign and supported by an envious socialist government, the shareholders of Gnome Plc have queried my annual salary of £300 million in a financial year which saw Gnome Plc making losses of £300 million and which saw the share price fall from £37.60 to 2p.

The desperate attempt to correlate performance and pay displays an abysmal ignorance of the workings of a large corporate business such as my own.

To blame the chairman for the recent disastrous performance of the company is as naïve as it is true. It is like blaming the captain of the Titanic for sailing straight into an iceberg!

The truth of the matter is that Gnome Plc has been hard hit by a raft of factors beyond our control. One could name the war in Iraq, the deadly virus SARS, the break-up of the popular singing group S Club 7 and many others.

But these are just the tip of the iceberg which Gnome Plc has steamed into under my inspired leadership.

Who could possibly argue now that I am not worth the paltry £600 million bonus that I have awarded myself for dealing with this unpleasant and unnecessary shareholder revolt?

E. Strobes pp. Lord Gnome Gnome Plc
Googol House Grand Cayman

Sir Nathaniel, a vicar . . . . . **PAUL GRUNERT**
Dull, a constable. . . . . **DUNCAN SMITH**

Love's Labour's Lost cast list, National Theatre

■ ST MALO: Largest amount of cannabis ever seized in joint operation

Jersey Evening Post

"By the time they've saved enough to buy a house they'll inherit this one"

DUNSINANE OBSERVER

'I'M NOT EVIL'

Says Macbeth's Wife

by Our TV Staff **HENRY THE PORTER**

AN ANGRY Lady Macbeth last night hit out at claims that she was the mastermind behind her husband's bid to cheat his way to the top prize of the kingdom of Scotland.

"The idea that my husband is stupid and will do anything I tell him is just ridiculous," she snapped.

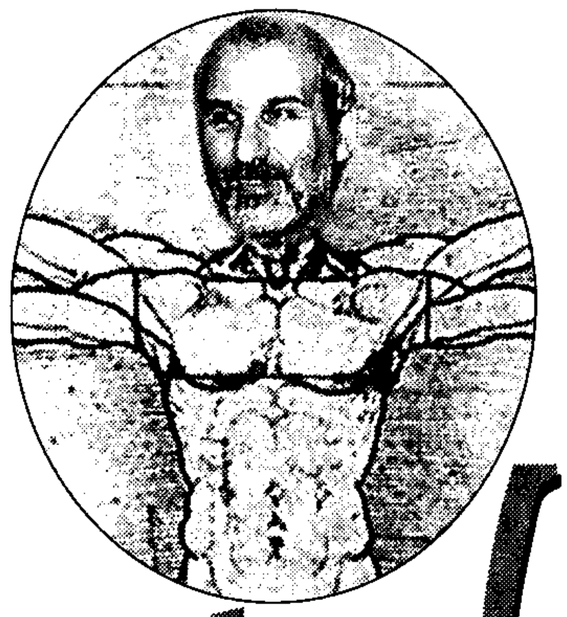
"I did not help him in any way to murder Duncan or any of the others. He could have given up when he had got as far as Thane of Cawdor. But he had to go for the top prize, which naturally made everyone suspicious."

The Macbeths have been offered a six-figure sum to turn their harrowing ordeal into a best-selling play by William Shakespeare, ghosted by the Royal Banquo of Scotland.

On Other Pages

■ Your Thanes Tonight *and* TV's top witch NIGELLA tells us how to turn eye of toad and leg of newt into a delicious summer salad.

What You Missed



THE ARTS DOCUMENTARY OF THE MILLENNIUM

Yentob

Presented by Leonardo Da Vinci

(Dramatic music)

Leonardo Da Vinci *(for it is he)*: No one can deny the extraordinary genius of the man known simply to generations of art lovers as "Yentob".

(Enter actor dressed as world-famous BBC Head of something-or-other.)

Da Vinci: Alano da Yentob was a true Renaissance Man. Not only could he sit in pointless management meetings...

(Dramatic reconstruction shows actor shuffling papers marked "Internal Resource Directorate".)

Da Vinci: ...but he could also commission himself to present flagship arts documentaries.

(Reconstruction shows actor talking to reflection in mirror.)

Yentob *(to mirror)*: Who on earth can I get to front this major series?

Yentob *(in mirror)*: How about myself?

Yentob: What a brilliant idea. You are a genius.

Yentob: And so am I.

(More dramatic music.)

Leonardo: Yes, the world of the arts was never going to be the same again. But Yentob was also an inventor, the creator of a number of revolutionary vehicles like 'The Omnibus'. But did it actually work?

(We see dramatic reconstruction of Yentob interviewing Mel Brooks.)

Yentob: Ha ha ha ha, Mel. You're really wonderful!

Da Vinci: It certainly worked for him, but sadly Yentob was not taken seriously in his own time. Even his most enduring legacy, the sublime 'Last of the Supper Wine', was not sufficiently admired by his contemporaries and it is only today that we can fully appreciate the extraordinary range of talent that made up the man we know as the all-powerful BBC Head of Paperclips Leonardo da Botney *(That's quite enough. Ed.)*

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

How We Got The Scoop Of The Millennium

by Charles 'Scoop' Moore

Editor of the Daily Telegraph

EVERYONE in the world is talking about our amazing scoop!

Well, now I'm going to reveal how we did it.

The Telegraph's top reporter in Baghdad, William Boot, was wandering past the war-shattered Ministry of Secrets when he noticed a door open.

He walked in and found a scene of total chaos. Looting mobs had stripped the entire building bare.

Only one room remained miraculously intact.

There, surrounded by smoke-blackened rubble, was a small cardboard box bearing the legend, in Arabic, "For the attention of the Daily Telegraph".

Feverishly tearing the box open, our man found, to his astonishment, a pile of perfectly preserved documents marked "Ultra Top Secret – For Saddam's Eyes Only" (also in Arabic).

Boot at once suspected that he had stumbled unexpectedly on a sensational scoop – nothing less than the "smoking gun" that would prove beyond any doubt that the war had not been a waste of time.

The first priceless find was a letter from Sir Edward Heath, offering to conduct the Baghdad Radio Symphony Orchestra in exchange for an appropriate fee (300,000 barrels of oil).

Next was a letter from the Rev. J.C. Flannel, vicar of St Ivel's church in Neasden, enclosing a cheque for £5.53 collected at a special Evensong For Peace, made out to "The Victims of the Allied Sanctions Regime".

But the greatest prize of all was nestling at the bottom of the box – nothing less than a signed letter from Saddam Hussein himself, promising Labour MP George Galloway control of the entire Kirkuk oil field as "a small token of our appreciation for your articles in the Mail on Sunday (Scottish edition), describing Mr Blair as a 'worse war criminal' than Hitler. PS. Incidentally, Hitler was a good man!"

The letter was signed in Mr Hussein's absence by the head of his elite Medina Letter-Writing Division, whose name was illegible.

There could be no more solid proof than this that George Galloway should be hanged for treason – if indeed he is guilty, as our lawyers have asked me to add, and which of course he was last night vehemently denying from his luxury £250,000 Algarve hideaway.

On Other Pages

Gorgeous George's Sultry Palestinian Wife – Is She More Lovely Than Liz? (Pics and comments by Alexander Chancellor.)

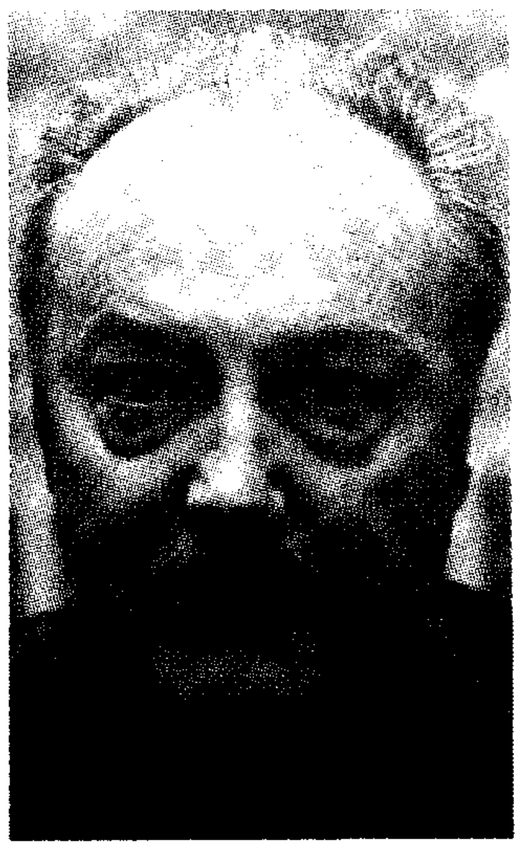
WHAT THE PAPERS SAY

BAGHDAD **Sun**

The Paper That Supports Our Boys Running Away

Friday, May 2, 2003

HELP SAVE LITTLE GEORGIE!



THERE are few more tragic stories to come out of the war than that of little Georgie Galloway, an innocent civilian who suddenly found himself blown away by a bombshell launched by the Daily Telegraph.

One minute Georgie was a cheeky chappy who had everything to live for – a lavish £250,000 villa in Portugal, a beautiful Palestinian wife and a gorgeous column in the Mail on Sunday (Scottish edition).

Then, from nowhere, it all blew up in his face.

Little Georgie had become the latest and most poignant victim of a pointless war.

But experts are convinced that Georgie can be saved, by a massive legal operation involving the world's top lawyers.

The only problem: the cost. And this is where you Sun readers can show your compassion.

Give generously so that Georgie can rebuild his shattered life and be fitted with an artificial moustache.

How Your Money Will Be Used

£1000 will buy 10 minutes of a top QC's time.

£5000 will buy you 5 minutes in court.

£100,000 will buy an expert witness to say that the documents are false.

Er... that's it.

The Daily Telegraph

Bring him to justice

DESPITE the liberation of Iraq, our readers know that the war isn't over until the mustachioed tyrant is finally brought to justice. And that man of course is George Galloway *(surely 'Saddam Hussein'? Ed)*.

If it is proved that a third country, such as Portugal *(surely 'Syria'? Ed)* is harbouring this dangerous despot, then Washington has no choice but to invade Europe to flush this evil lunatic from his bolthole *(now you're talking. Ed)*.

THE INDEPENDENT

Friday 2 May 2003

The war is over – now these questions must be answered

WHY DOES the Independent keep filling the front page with questions in big type? *Hasn't it got any stories?* Can't it afford any photographs? What about a drawing? Or is that too expensive as well? **And what about that front page full of numbers?** *What was that all about?* Isn't that enough? Ed.

ME AND MY SPOON

THIS WEEK

THE LORD CHANCELLOR, THE LORD IRVINE OF LAIRG

As the holder of the most senior office in the country, do spoons play any part in your official life?

In the course of a long and, in the view of many observers, distinguished career, I have to say that the role of the spoon has not been one to which I have ever felt it incumbent upon me to address myself.

Have spoons then, played any part in your private life?

It is a regrettable facet of contemporary journalism that reporters like yourself – and I say this without any malicious intent whatsoever – believe that they have an inborn right to pry into the most intimate details of the personal life of those public figures whom they believe are "fair game" for their intrusive and impertinent lines of enquiry. In this instance I find your question concerning my domestic cutlery arrangements an intolerable invasion of my right to privacy under Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Is it true that when you were refurbishing your flat in the House of Lords, you commissioned the replica of a set of spoons designed by Pugin, at a cost to the taxpayer of £4 million?

I have to warn you with all the authority invested in me by Her Majesty in appointing me as the head of the legal profession, that allegations of the type you have just been so foolhardy as to utter could well result in proceedings for criminal libel being visited upon you personally, upon the editor and the proprietor of your newspaper, its printers, distributors and all persons responsible for its publication, whomsoever they may be.

In that case, I had better not ask you if anything amusing has ever happened to you in connection with a spoon.

That, if I may say so, is a very prudent decision on your part.

NEXT WEEK: Andrew Marr – *"Me and My Mars Bar."*

"Strange... I've just had a text message... it says 'Lying in dark, small place – where the hell am I?' "

LONDON REELS AT STAGE SEX SHOCKER

by Our Drama Staff **Ned Wankey**

LONDON theatregoers were shocked last night by a new West End play that contained not a single scene showing explicit sexual intercourse.

Said veteran first-nighter Norman Balon, 86, "I am utterly disgusted. I pay good money to go to the theatre and I don't expect to be confronted by a lot of fully-clothed actors just talking to one another."

Bums On Stage

Said another horrified drama fan, Mrs Annunciata Balon, "It was terrible. There was no rape, no sodomy and not even one scene of full-frontal nudity.

"What are tourists meant to make of it? What kind of image of Britain will they take away? They come all the way over here and then they are shamelessly ripped off like this."

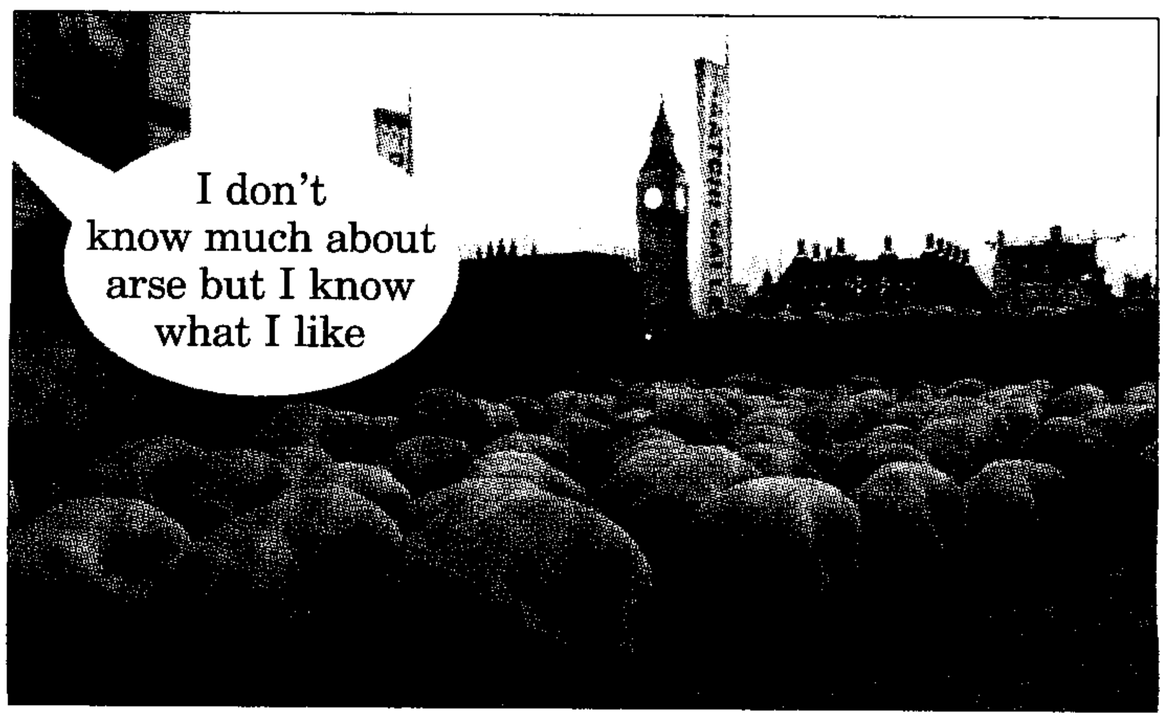
The cast of the play, however, defended their controversial production. Said one actor, Simon Sweety, "At first it feels odd, standing in front of all those people with your clothes on. But you soon get used to it and in the end it's just another job."

School news

St Cakes

SARS term begins today. There are 861 boys and 211 girls in quarantine. Ah-Choo (Beecham's) is Head of Aches. Mee-No-Wel (Lockett's) is Keeper of the Prescriptions. The new Director of Sick Form Studies is Dr T. Stuttaford (O.C.). Noses will be run on May 21. There will be a performance of *Don't Kiss Me Kate* in the Sanatorium on June 15. No tickets are available from the Bursar, Maj. Duncan-Cough (deceased). Prize-giving is on June 16, speaker Angus Deayton (O.C.). The Fifth Form Classical Society will perform Milton's Face Masque *Coma* in the Operating Theatre on July 1. Panics will be on July 10. There will be no exeats.

SAATCHI GALLERY OPENS



WORLD HEALTH ROUND-UP

SARS Outbreak To Spread

EXPERTS warned today that the spread of SARS stories to the front pages of Britain's newspapers would only get worse.

"As long as the war was going on, stories about SARS were safely quarantined on the foreign news pages," said one concerned journalist, "but once worryingly empty spots started to appear on the front pages, a nasty rash of SARS articles appeared from out of the blue virtually overnight."

It is thought the current outbreak of SARS stories will be highly contagious *(cont. p. 94)*

'Cough Could Be Fatal' Say Experts

TOP scientists today warned that there was a real sense of complacency in the Tory party about the serious dangers posed by Iain Duncan Cough.

"Once a party like the Tories has become infected with a leader like Iain Duncan Cough the prognosis is grim," warned one. "The party will start to become lethargic, tired, and may die a slow, painful death in the opinion polls."

The Tory party however insisted that the threat posed by Iain Duncan Cough to their long-term survival was minimal, saying they're already working on a Clarke/Portillo antidote that should be ready by the summer.

SATS Virus Alert

TEACHERS today issued a chilling warning that the SATS virus threatens the well-being of all 7 and 11-year-olds and has infected British schools *(cont. p. 94)*

TV Highlights

Chinese Broadcasting Corporation

Monday, 8.30pm

SARS In Their Eyes

Tonight everyone pretends to be Michael Jackson.

Eye Rating

Don't catch it if you can.

(That's enough SARS. Ed.)

"I told you she wouldn't turn up..."

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam Sir Paul Getty, Philanthropist

So. Farewell then
Sir Paul Getty.

One of the world's
Richest men,
You were best known
For giving money to many
Good causes.

And to many artists,
Writers and
Poets.

But not
To me.

Despite my many letters
Suggesting it.

But I don't hold it
Against you.
You mean
Bastard!

E. John-Paul Thribb
(£17½ million would have been appreciated)

The Paul Getty Who Knew Me

by **Dominic Lawson** (aged 12)

I shall never forget going on Paul Getty's yacht. It was really big, and really impressed all the locals when we anchored in some flash Mediterranean harbour.

His was always the biggest boat there, and you could have drinks on it and everything.

The story that I think best sums up my very good friend (and one of the world's richest men) was when, one night, we were all drinking this fabulously expensive French wine.

He turned to me in the middle of dinner and said, "Who are you?".

It showed how full of curiosity this man was about his fellow human beings. I shall never forget it.

© D. Lawson *The Sunday Gettygraph*

The Paul Getty Who Knew Me

by **Sir John Rumpole** (aged 94)

I shall never forget the many fabulous parties I was asked to at Sir Paul Getty's enormous estate.

Fortunately, it was quite near where I live in the Chilterns, so one didn't have to drive too far to get there. But it was certainly worth it, for the chance to sample Paul's legendary cellar.

The story that I think best sums him up was the time when, in the middle of lunch, I leaned over to him and asked, "Could I have another glass of that excellent champagne?"

Without a word he filled my glass to the brim. That's how he was, generous to the end.

© Sir J. Rumpole.

2003 National Curriculum Tests

Question 7

If the Government goes ahead with plans to make all seven and eleven year olds sit this test will your teacher...

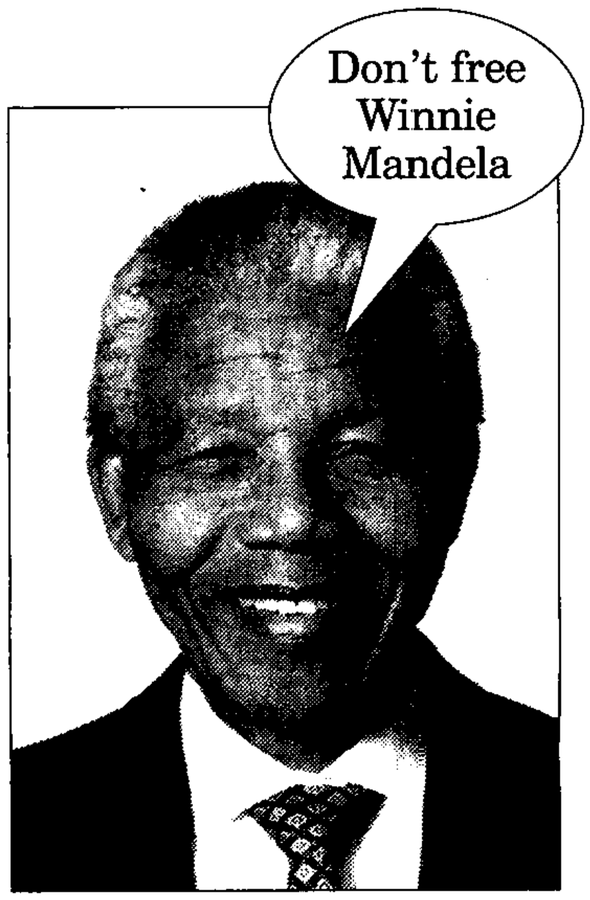
A Go on strike after lunch break?

B Go on strike at the end of the day?

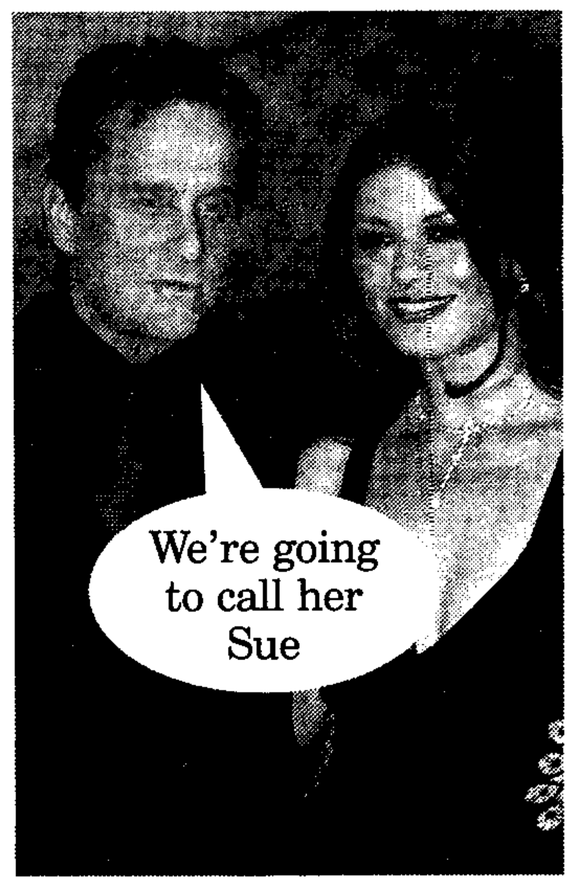
C Go on strike tomorrow?

D None of the above as he's already on strike over teaching assistants being allowed to take some classes?

NOBEL WINNER'S NEW CAMPAIGN



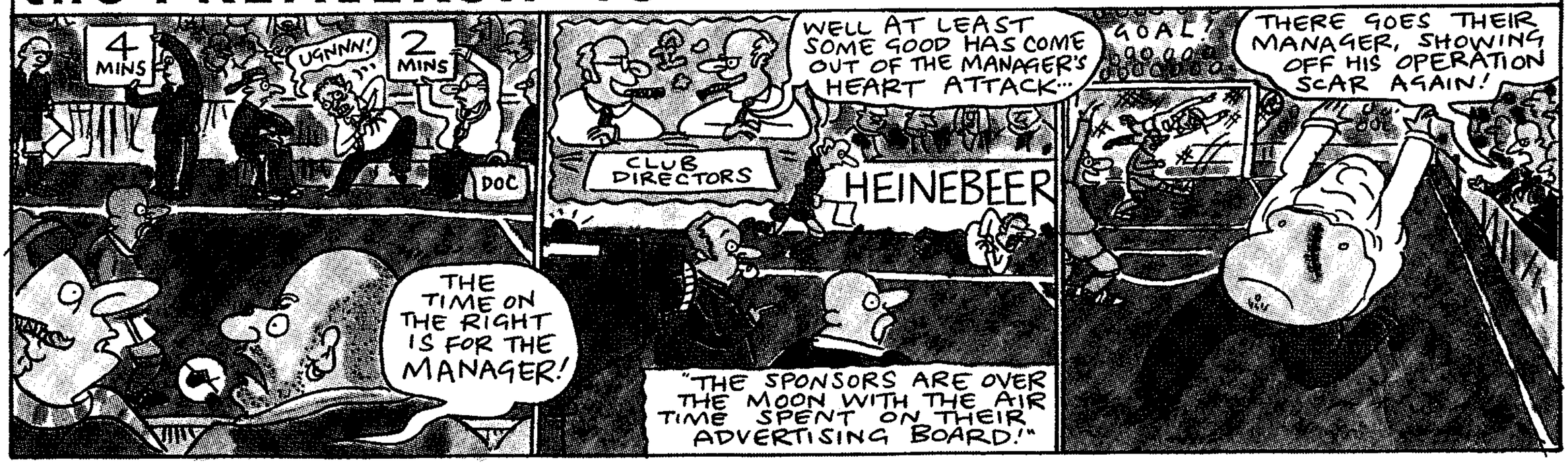
ZETA-JONES BABY



The scheme will include a Homebase DIY store, Kentucky Fried Children restaurant, car showroom, nine industrial units and 200 parking spaces.

Gloucestershire Echo

the PREMIERSH*TS


PAUL WOOD
4 MINS
UGNNN!
2 MINS
DOC
THE TIME ON THE RIGHT IS FOR THE MANAGER!
CLUB DIRECTORS
WELL AT LEAST SOME GOOD HAS COME OUT OF THE MANAGER'S HEART ATTACK...
HEINEBEER
"THE SPONSORS ARE OVER THE MOON WITH THE AIR TIME SPENT ON THEIR ADVERTISING BOARD!"
GOAL!
THERE GOES THEIR MANAGER, SHOWING OFF HIS OPERATION SCAR AGAIN!

Telegraph Exclusive

This Week's Incredible Document Discoveries

SUNDAY

Confidential, top secret letter found in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated 3rd March 2003, from President Chirac of France, offering Saddam a chateau in the Loire Valley, a seat in his cabinet and the use of his wife should he desire it at any point. Signed *"Votre cher ami, Jacques"* in Arabic.

WEDNESDAY

Confidential secret letter found in Ministry of Weapons of Mass Destruction, dated April 1st 2003, from President Putin of Russia, offering to supply Saddam Hussein with as many nuclear weapons as he would like at "a very reasonable price". Signed, *"Your Comrade-in-Arms against the forces of American imperialism, Vladimir Stalin"* in Arabic.

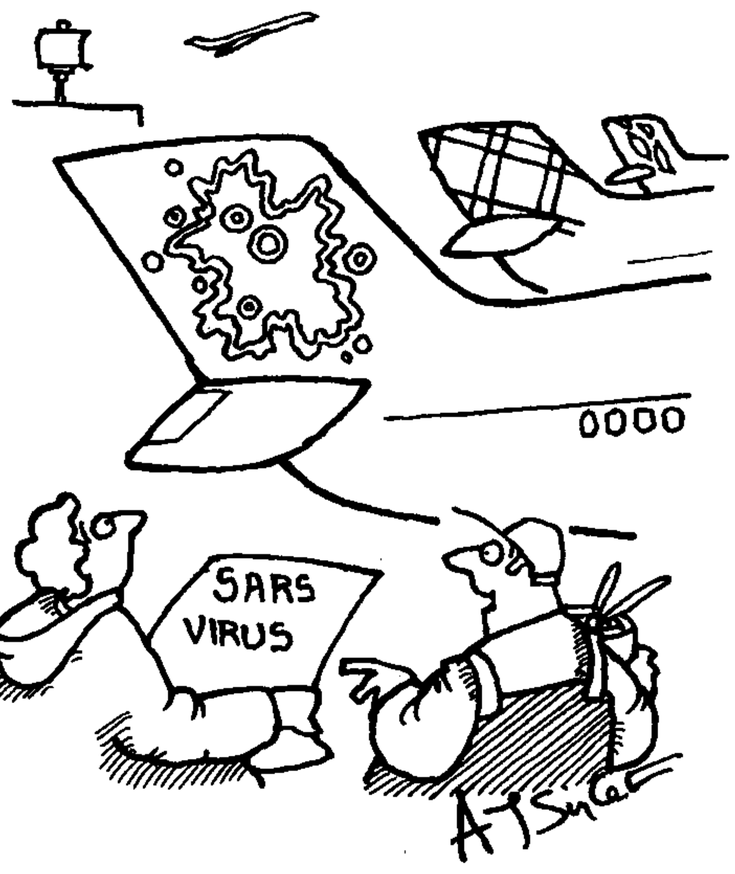
FRIDAY

Confidential, top secret, thank you letter to Saddam Hussein found in Ministry of Unburnt Documents, dated April 15th 2003, from Osama bin Laden.

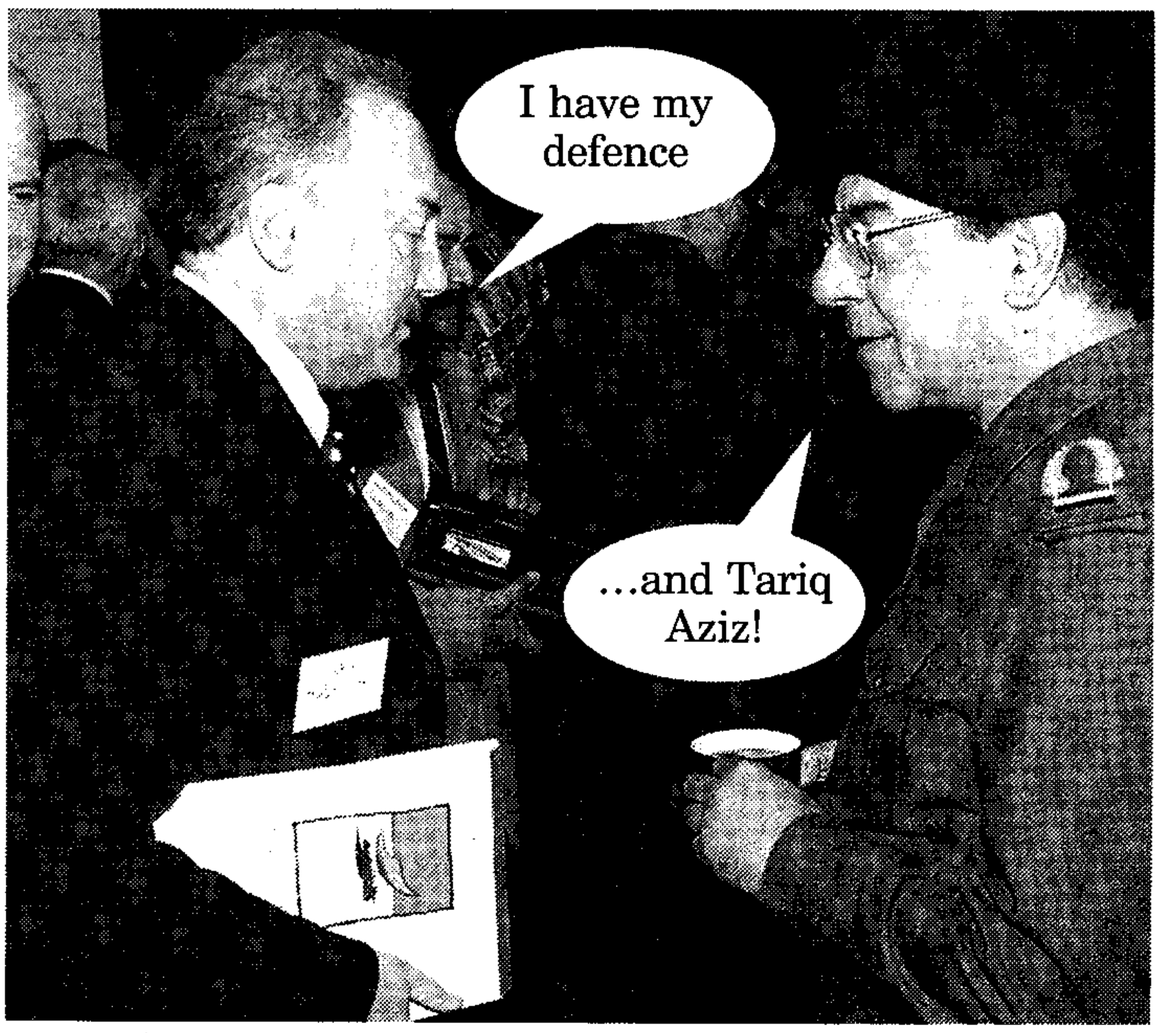
It says, *"A thousand thank yous for the plane and the towers idea. It worked a treat. Here's to the next time!" Your Jihad Co-warrior against the Infidel Osama bin Laden.*

SUNDAY

Confidential, top secret letter, dated May 2nd 2003, to Saddam Hussein from the editor of the Daily Mail in which he thanks Saddam for helping to bring down house prices and hasten the downfall of the hated Tony Blair. It is signed *"Your brother against the New Labour dictatorship, Paul Dacre,"* in Arabic. *(That's enough secret documents. Ed.)*

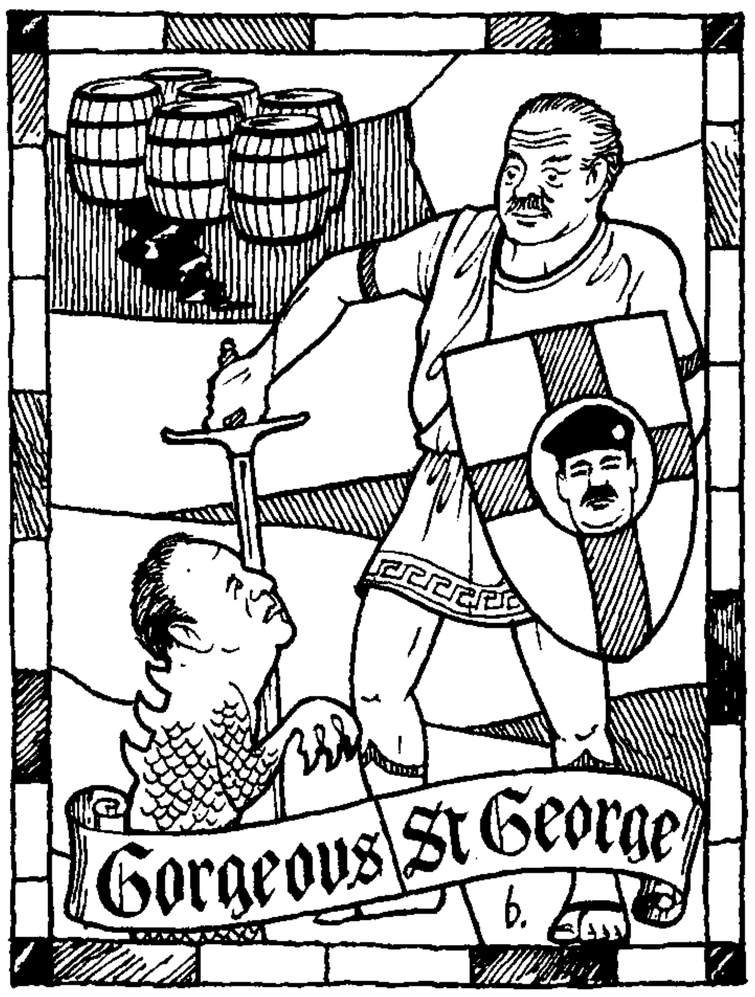


GREAT IRAQI JOKES with Comical Ali



Lives of the Saints

St George of England



THE LEGEND of St George is shrouded in mystery, but the familiar story has been handed down to believers and is one we still revere today – how the noble George of Galloway bravely took on the Daily Telegraph and slew the monster in an epic battle in the High Court.

George is traditionally depicted as a hero standing alone against the fire-breathing, right-wing newspaper.

There are, of course, other scurrilous versions of the legend in which St George emerges in a less flattering light – namely, as a bit of a shifty self-publicist. In one variation of the tale, St George is actually defeated by the dragon and executed for treason.

But today we celebrate the enduring popular myth of the great English hero St George, with his red cross face and his trusty moustache *(cont. p. 94)*

Taken from the Book of English Martyrs by St Christopher the Sylvester.

The Sunday Times Pretty Rich List

1. **Rupert Murdoch** Pretty rich of him to publish a list of the filthy rich without putting himself in it.

2. **The Sunday Times** Pretty rich of them to leave out the details of their owner's enormous wealth and include everyone else's.

3. Er...

4. That's rich.

DIARY

THE DAILY MAIL'S GEOFFREY LEVY

Over the years, the Virgin Mary has gone to desperate lengths to build up a reputation for simplicity and devotion – not to mention sexual purity.

Ordinary, decent, middle-class families the world over look up to her for her legendary care of the less-well-off. In some circles, her name has become a byword for charity. The Pope himself regards her as a saint.

But who, close friends are beginning to ask, is the REAL Virgin Mary?

Beneath her carefully-nurtured goody-two-shoes image, who is this woman with the floor-length robes who, friends say, has spent a lifetime battling with a multitude of weight problems?

Strutting the world in her costly designer cloaks – specially designed, experts maintain, to hide the way she see-saws between suffering from anorexia and letting herself go – the Virgin Mary has employed every trick in the book to foster her cleaner-than-clean public image.

To be fair, her earning power is undeniable.

In the stark words of one former associate, she works hard and she plays hard. Yet key questions remain about this tactile career woman – questions that continue to baffle even her closest friends and former business associates.

And today these questions look set to rebound, possibly rocking her career and reputation to their very foundations.

So what drives the Virgin Mary?

Friends say that the real Mary is far removed from the saintly image. In fact, I can now reveal, she is a ruthless single parent career woman caught in a tragic love web.

Having grown up in a four-bedroomed luxury home set in two acres – valued at £250,000 in today's terms – the unmarried Mary stuck two fingers up at her hard-working parents by shouting her underage pregnancy from the rooftops.

HE was an ageing out-of-work labourer with no prospects to speak of.

SHE was an underage foreign girl with a baby on the way – and a burning desire to be famous.

Wearing an air of injured innocence – a mask which, former colleagues attest, she ruthlessly employs at all times – Mary managed to persuade the elderly Joseph to make an honest woman of her.

So who exactly was this Joseph – and how could he have fallen for Mary's finely-honed manipulative skills?

Aided, no doubt, by the hard-pressed taxpayer, Joseph delighted in calling himself a carpenter. But – aside from tables and chairs and a full range of bedroom furniture – former friends are unable to recall anything he actually made. One even recalls a "slight tilt" to one of Joseph's much-vaunted tables.

So much for those earlier boasts of fine workmanship.

In truth, Joseph was a tragic old man who cut a pitiful figure in his rootless ethnic circles. But one thing was for sure. Joseph liked living well – event though, as close colleagues confirm, he had a fear of commitment. But, like many men before him, faced with a stunning young pregnant schoolgirl, this decrepit lothario found he just couldn't say no.

To this day, the Virgin Mary dines out on stories of THAT birth.

While many will find it hard to imagine any ordinary, decent mother wishing to regale her friends with tales of giving birth in a sordid cowshed, surrounded by salivating farmyard beasts, close investigation reveals that Mary is, in the words of one former colleague, "fixated with fame – even if it means turning a blind eye to basic hygiene".

Though there is as yet no firm evidence that Mary was at that time on hard drugs, former associates continue to voice their suspicions that the reason she seldom had time for drugs was that she was in the midst of her uphill struggle against weight problems. "If she'd had a mind to take drugs," says one close friend, "then, believe me, drugs are what she'd have taken."

The oddball couple soon made it clear that they had, against the silent majority of concerned parents, decided to call the baby "Jesus".

"It's not a name I'd have chosen for a baby boy," says one former associate. "It makes me shudder to think of the teasing he got in school."

Incredible as it may seem to those who try to give their children a decent start in life, within minutes of the baby's birth Joseph and Mary allowed low-paid farm labourers into the stable to look at the baby.

It is not known whether the pair of them charged the labourers for this facility, but friends confirm that the unmarried couple made no secret of "often being short of a few bob". If the authorities later investigated the matter, their report has never come to light. Whether it was secretly destroyed on the say-so of Mary is a matter of speculation.

Next, it was the turn of the so-called "Three Kings", a shadowy, secretive sect of bachelors in flashy robes, at least one of them an unashamed representative of an ethnic minority. These three unsavoury characters brought small packages into the stable believed to contain "gold", "frankincense" and "myrrh". Recurrent rumours that they smuggled these substances into the stable intravenously have never been verified.

But one thing is clear. As one child expert puts it, "These are wholly unsuitable gifts for a new-born baby. This is a story that gives widespread cause for concern".

The tragedy of that tragic infant's life – tragic betrayal by a former associate, followed by tragic shame in the courts, and a tragic all-too-public death on the cross, topless – might have led other mothers to put the brakes on their tireless pursuit of headlines.

But not so the Virgin Mary.

Over the subsequent centuries, this ambitious daughter of hard-working parents has never turned up her nose at an opportunity for self-promotion, making ill-judged personal appearances in her signature halo at grottoes and shrines the world over. Perhaps, as friends suggest, it appeals to her massive ego.

She seems to have it all. Fame. Glamour. Friends in high places.

But will the Virgin Mary ever find true happiness?

Most experts believe it increasingly unlikely. "The last time she appeared at Lourdes," confides one, "I could have sworn I spotted cellulite."

As told to

CRAIG BROWN

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT HOW WE CAN BUILD A LASTING PEACE IN IRAQ, GARY...
ME TOO, STING.
MAYBE WE SHOULD ORGANISE A PEACE CONCERT IN IRAQ TO HELP UNIFY THE OPPOSING FACTIONS OF THAT WAR TORN LAND...
TOP IDEA, GARY
IT WOULD BE GREAT TO BRING SUNNI AND SHI'A TOGETHER, WOULDN'T IT?
DIFFICULT THOUGH...
SONNY'S DEAD AND CHER WOULDN'T WORK WITH HIM ANYWAY...
WHAT?

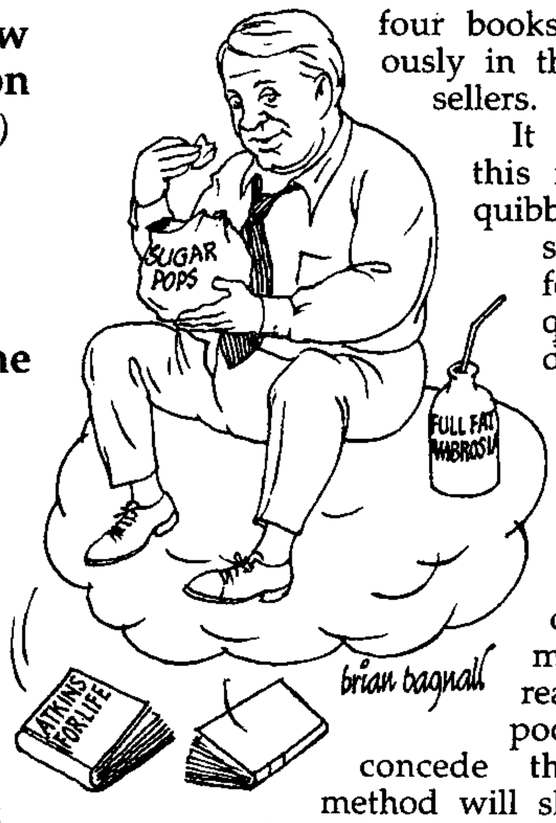
Literary Review

Eating his words

Dr Atkins New Diet Revolution
(Vermilion, £7.99)

Dr Atkins New Diet Cookbook
(Vermilion, £6.99)

Atkins for Life – The Next Level
Dr Robert C Atkins
(Macmillan, £10.99)



THE American sugar lobby has declared war on the World Health Organisation for suggesting that guzzling too much sugar might be bad for you. But in all truth the damage has long been done, thanks to Dr Robert C Atkins.

"The typical western diet – or, as I sometimes call it, the high-sugar horrors – makes you fat. In the short term, it's also a sure road to daily misery. In the long term it leads grimly on towards heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and a host of other catastrophes," he says in his *New Diet Revolution*. Given that this is one of the 50 best-selling books of all time, Big Sugar will be mighty glad that the venerable doctor is no longer with us.

For a few weeks ago Dr Atkins, inventor of the Atkins Diet, was on his way to work when he slipped on some ice, hit his head and died. It was an unfortunate way to go, but much better than had he wasted away from malnutrition, for example, which might have raised eyebrows about his all-conquering health regime. No doubt he is currently luxuriating among the heavenly host with a doorstep Mars Bar sandwich and a cup of tea – milk and six sugars, please.

Atkins' central thesis – that a high protein, low-carbohydrate diet increases our metabolic rate so that we burn fat faster – promises not only weight loss but weight loss with cheeseburgers, butter and mayo. Not surprisingly, the lure of a new-you nostrum that promises all gain and no pain has proved extremely attractive. As a result, Atkins leaves us with an incredible four books simultaneously in the UK best-sellers.

It is not for this reviewer to quibble with the science put forward by a qualified cardiologist such as Dr Atkins, especially as there are plenty of scientists out there more than ready to pooh-pooh. Most concede that Atkins' method will shed pounds but they add that cocaine addiction and death also cause weight loss. A brief survey of anti-Atkinsites suggests that denying yourself carbohydrates and maxing out on proteins can lead to cancer, kidney damage, bad breath, gout, high cholesterol, acne, thinning hair and frequent urination, among all the other modern hoodoos. As with every other diet ever invented, in other words, it's horses for courses. You can't have your cake and eat it. That would be wholly prohibited under Atkins rules anyway.

So assuming that the diet works for you, and that you don't, for example, slip over and die tomorrow wishing perhaps that you'd thrown caution to the wind and gobbled that last Snickers, the only problem remains which book should you buy?

The *New Diet Cookbook*, for example, offers "a useful summary of Dr Atkins' bestselling diet philosophy" along with 180 pages of recipes and an eight-page carbohydrate gram counter. Whereas *Dr Atkins' New Diet Revolution*, offers a much more considerable exposition of the diet philosophy, but also includes 130 pages of recipes and that carbohydrate gram counter. If, having bought these two accompanying books, you feel that what you really need is a third carbohydrate gram counter, you might want to invest in *Dr Atkins New Carbohydrate Gram Counter*, yours for a further £4.67.

For the long-term, the completely-updated must-have edition of the *New Diet Revolution* now contains a "lifetime maintenance plan." This is not a million miles away from the gist of *Atkins for Life*, another new edition which, by chance, also happens to contain 150 pages of recipes, meal plans and several other regurgitated lumps of lo-carb diversions. It does not, however, contain a Carbohydrate Gram Counter, so you should probably put aside £4.67 for the real deal.

And so it goes on, through Dr Atkins' *Age-Defying Diet, Quick & Easy New Diet Cookbook, New Diet Cookbook, New Diet Revolution, Health Revolution, SuperEnergy Diet Cookbook, SuperEnergy Diet, Diet Cookbook and Diet Revolution*. It is worth listing them, just about, because even in the titles it's apparent that one idea is being stretched very thinly across a panoply of health and lifestyle issues. Even after the untimely death of its founder, the Atkins Centre for Complementary Medicine promises us that "the legacy and the work continue". And no doubt so will the books. Bon appetit!

WHAT YOU DIDN'T MISS Pt 94

The Book Against God
James Wood
(Cape, £12.99)

WE spent our wedding night in a country hotel of quite egregious desuetude. We were too late for dinner, but room service sent up a mixed grill, brumous in aspect, and some subtly unstructured sandwiches. Jane ran the bath, while divesting herself of various abstruse undergarments. Behind her, steam rose in quaintly Niagaran fashion from the taps. I touched her anguished elbow.

"Doesn't Schopenhauer have a mad but really quite likeable theory that marriage corresponds to the chromatic possibilities of the pianoforte: engagement a cascade of vigorous arpeggios, wedding night a *crescendo*, old age plaintive *diminuendo* and so forth?"

Jane laughed. "Darling, is this your way of asking me to commit osculation?"

"I was thinking about the vicar's address. I really couldn't stand the Reverend Mulcaster's pseudo-Dosteoveskyan line of argument. It seemed so fucking unempirical."

Silently we climbed into the bed and uncoiled ourselves amidst its punitive pillows. Without warning a phial of the purest provincial atavism broke in my hand and released an odiferous exaltation. "Darling," I said, "something very important has happened. I've just decided that I don't believe in God."

"How thrilling for you, my love. But can you not sleep?"

Wasn't it Heidegger who said that wakefulness was like sleep but without the pyjamas? Sadly the reference books that might have verified this discreet epigram were not to hand. Quietly we nestled together. Stroking her embarrassed shoulder, I knew that an agreeable consequence of our matrimonial state would be the necessity to read Nietzsche to her.

Meanwhile it was growing late. "Darling," she said mistily at one point. "If you rolled over there would be just a little more space."

"Oh no," I replied seriously. "Not more space, surely? Just less of it occupied."

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

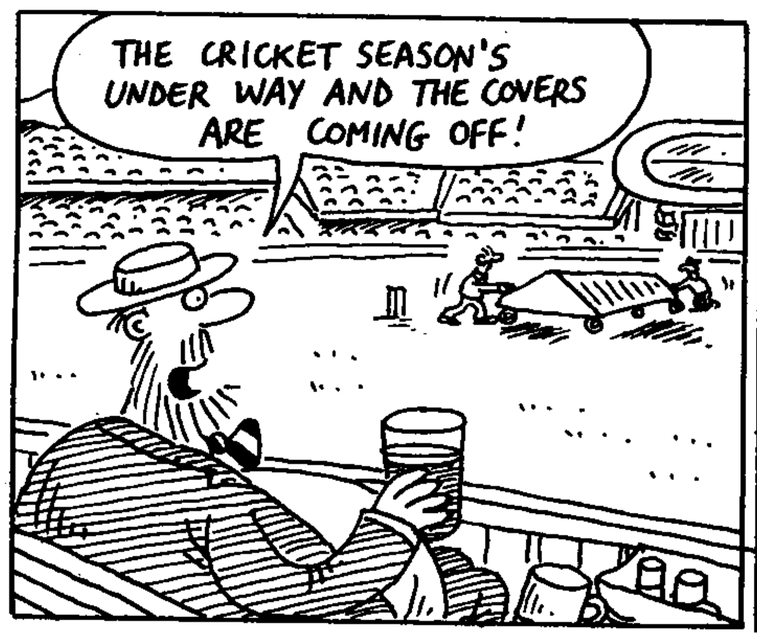
■ THE descent of venerable independent publisher Duckworth into administration, with only the merest hope of a white knight saviour, is being presented as a sad day for publishing. After John Murray disappeared into the Hodder/WH Smug maw, it was the only long-established independent still in business.

It is sad of course; but not in the way that the misty-eyed coverage has made it out to be. There was not much of the old Duckworth left, and what has failed was effectively a five year-old company using the old name. So, the greatest loss is that of enterprise.

The old company hit trouble in the late 1990s, after long-time leading light Colin Haycraft's death, and was rescued by Lica, a venture capital firm with long experience in the book trade. Unfortunately disagreements between money man Stephen Hill and publishing director Robin Baird-Smith led to the latter's departure, which precipitated the exit of star authors Beryl Bainbridge and John Bayley.

With such a clear-out the way was open to remould the company. In came former Fourth Estater Sarah Such, with a new, younger list called Duck Editions and a stated intention to buy material that would be optioned for film production. A valiant experiment, but it failed to catch on; Such left and sales dwindled. The final blow came when the rent on the company's Soho offices was nearly doubled. So, the collapse *is* bad news – but if Duckworth is resuscitated, don't imagine it will mark a return to the glory days of Haycraft, Bainbridge and Bayley.

■ WORD reaches the *Eye* that David Bickford, chief legal officer to MI5 and MI6 from 1987 to 1995, is writing a book about the security and intelligence services. And the news has prompted a mild panic



among his old colleagues.

In the past Bickford has gone on record to criticise the spooks, arguing that the tripartite structure of MI5, MI6 and GCHQ led to the "triplication of management, triplication of bureaucracy and triplication of turf battles" and failed to justify their huge government budget. He therefore advocated a "fierce review" and proposed a merger. Bickford also accused the intelligence community of neglecting the threat posed by economic crime.

Whitehall officials are laying in extra supplies of blue pencils, saying they are determined to remove any "embarrassments" from the manuscript before publication. What can they be referring to?

■ **FOR its Paperback of the Week on 20 April, the *Observer* chose Will Hutton's *The World We're In*. "This is a passionate polemic and an eloquent summary of the world we're in," the review reverently concluded, absent-mindedly omitting to add that the author is also chief commentator and former editor of the *Observer*.**

'Bookworm'

REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

■ THE Works bookshop in Altrincham contains a couple of salutary bargains.

Des Lynam's biography, published at £19.99 when he was the face of BBC sport, has followed his fortunes with ITV and is selling for just £3. Faring even worse is his old BBC colleague Peter Jay, whose inappropriately-titled *Roads to Riches Or The Wealth Of Man* has crashed from £20 to 99p.

Black to basics

Erasure

Percival Everett

(Faber, £14.99)

"I LOOK at the door and then at Tito and Yellow. 'I got to get me a gun.' 'And what chew gone do with a piece?' Tito ax. 'First thing we gone do is rob that K'rean muthafucka over in the plaza.' 'Why you wanna fuck wit him?' Tito say. 'I don't like the way the bitch be lookin at me when I be in there. Like he think I gone steal from his ass.' 'You is gone steal from his ass,' Yellow say. Tito laugh. 'So?' I say. 'That ain't give him no right.' Yellow say, 'Nigger, you crazy.'"

The foregoing is an extract of a novel called initially *My Pafology*, later just *Fuck*, by a black American writer called Stagg R. Leigh. Submitted to Random House, it won an advance of $600,000. Film rights went for three million; it got picked up by a famous black talk show hostess and featured in her book club; finally it won the National Book Association award for fiction.

It is of course a parody, in its author's words a "piece of shit", written under a pseudonym by a writer who, though black, is not interested in writing this kind of ghetto blast. He's a college professor from California who gives papers at the Nouveau Romain Society and would much rather be writing obscure postmodern reworkings of Greek tragedy. But can he get them published? Apparently not, because he's "not black enough" for his supposed readership.

This writer's name is Thelonious Ellison, and he too is an alter ego, that of the real author (oh what metafictional fun we are having) Percival Everett. For aught we know, P. Everett, who is also black (but again not black enough) is himself a pseudonym, of some other writer altogether; maybe even a white, or Asian or Native American writer. Maybe not even American. Who knows? The point he's trying to make is that it doesn't, or shouldn't, matter but sadly it does.

Percival's quest has been to show up the rottenness at the core of American letters, and by extension the whole notion of "positive segregation". Books like *Native Son* and *The Color Purple* get his (or his narrator's) goat. Their Uncle Thomist philosophy, that black culture should be celebrated for what it is, even if that makes it look dumb, is offensive to middle class Harvard-educated persons of colour. His holy grail is the notion that a book should be judged by its content, not its cover, particularly not that bit of the cover that features the author's name and photograph. Nor should it routinely be filed away in the "African-American Studies" section of the bookstore.

Blaxploitation takes many forms but, as with the Jewish joke, the identity of the exploiter is crucial. Everett is not, however, the first black writer to complain about the "ghettoisation" (dread word) of his work. Nor is his use of the postmodern novel about a novelist writing a novel, with its random mix of story extracts, letters, lists, imaginary conversations and so forth. The name of his protagonist, Ellison, reminded me of Trey Ellis, another black novelist who in 1988 published (with Random House) a playful postmodern novel called *Platitudes* about a black novelist trying to escape the clichés of the "black" novel.

That, too, contains lengthy extracts of a supposedly typical black bestseller, the main difference being that it is set in the sharecropping Baptist South as opposed to a rapping city ghetto. Ellis is not quite as pleased with himself over his parody, written under the female pseudonym of Isshee Ayam, as Ellison/Everitt seems to be over his own little stab at faux Ebonics. But Ellis is having fun, while the joke in Everett's book seems to get lost in all the cleverness.

Everett may well not have read Ellis's book, though as Professor of English at the University of Southern California he perhaps ought to have done. What he might have learnt from it is to lighten up a bit.

Erasure was itself the winner of a literary prize, the 2002 Hurston/Wright Legacy Award for fiction. I assume this exists. If so, we have a black writer winning a prize for writing a parody about a black writer winning a prize for writing a parody. Perhaps black really is the new black.

Pseuds Corner

Every day, Pete Burns [flamboyant singer in '80s pop band Dead or Alive] battles the cultural holocaust of conformity.

SYLVIA PATTERSON
Guardian

My earliest memory is being in a pram in the dining room. I remember crying because the wallpaper was really busy and mad. It was brown, swirly, disgusting.

CAROLE SMILLIE
Sunday Times

It's a brave and intelligent record. The line "If I stopped lying, I'd just disappoint you" is an astute summation of the banal imposture of modern celebrity, and [Robbie] Williams sings it with the demented euphoria of a man past caring. "I am scum, I am scum" he wails as it fades, an emperor revelling in his nudity. Extraordinary.

ANDREW MUELLER
Guardian

The most surprising thing about the rehearsal is how Macy [Gray] keeps it together – ringmaster, not freakshow. She is so good at it that she lies down on one of the sofas and simultaneously sings, gives directions and reads a novel. She is both very present and in her own world. Watching her read her book and keep the beat, I realise that it is possible to coexist with humanity and be totally mentally divergent.

EMMA FORREST interviews Macy Gray, *Telegraph Magazine*

To grasp the enormity of this Westminster location, the sheer scale of redevelopments, and perhaps most importantly the prestige and potential of owning an apartment at New Palace Place...

Is an inspiration unto itself

This visionary path is now reality

Galliard Homes Limited housing development brochure

...almost unconsciously I am working in dark charcoal. At a time like this somehow the pleasure of using colour seems wrong.

Artist and peace protestor ROGER JONES, quoted in the *Guardian*

Within the veracity of geography and the resonance of history, the Museum of Scotland offers a lexicon of spatial types to suit the collection's variety of objects, artificially locating them within a recognizable domain. Circulation occupies a liminal zone, offering a contrapuntal journey beyond the taxonomy of collections or chronology.

GORDON BENSON
Architectural Review

Pseuds Corporate

The Brand as Interface – Professor Celia Lury

This paper will propose that the brand is a complex object that functions as the interface of a complex, non-linear system of production. It will argue that the brand comprises the diagram of a dynamic system of relations between products: a mechanism for exploiting the differentiation in time of a process of production through techniques of product qualification and re-qualification. The implications of considering the brand as an interface for the communication of information between producers and consumers will also be considered.

Brunel University seminar

Contributors: Strobes, Daniel Patton, Roz Greenwood, Oliver Frost, Paul Cornwell, Charlotte Philcox, Graham Fisher, Robert Kaye.

£10 paid for all entries

● *Will the 37 readers who have so far sent in an advert for the forthcoming Palgrave publication 'On Farting' please note that this has already been featured. Ed.*

IN THE BACK

IRAQI FORGERIES

HAMZA SANDWICH

THE Niger forgeries are not the only fake papers purporting to show that Iraq had an active nuclear weapons programme (see last *Eye*). In the recently leaked testimony of General Hussein Kamal, Iraq's most senior defector, there is a reference to another nuclear forgery.

Kamal ran Iraq's weapons programmes. He fled to Jordan in 1995 and exposed much of Saddam's nuclear, biological and chemical weapons planning. Tony Blair's dossier on Iraq, like foreign secretary Jack Straw's speeches, have been peppered with references to Kamal.

However, when the notes of his interview with the UN weapons inspectors from 1995 were unearthed by *Newsweek* earlier this year, they revealed that what Kamal actually said was that the weapons programmes were destroyed in 1991.

Newsweek's revelations attracted scant coverage in Britain and no newspaper noticed the reference to forged documents.

According to the interview transcript obtained by the *Eye*, Prof Maurizio Zifferero of the International Atomic Energy Agency (which supplied the UN with its nuclear inspectors), presented Kamal with a letter apparently relating to Iraq's nuclear programme.

Kamal responds: "It is a false document." Zifferero agrees, saying: "We are of the same conclusion... it is a fake document." Zifferero then adds that "Dr Khidir Abdul Abbas Hamza is related to this document".

Khidir Hamza, whom the UN weapons inspectors link to forgeries, is another Iraqi defector. He was involved in Iraq's aborted nuclear programme, although his claim to have been "Saddam's bomb maker" is seen as far-fetched. Despite his apparent links to forgeries, he has been a key figure to Washington hawks like assistant defence secretary Paul Wolfowitz and the exiled Iraqi National Congress. Contrary to Kamal's assertions, Hamza has argued that Iraq retained its weapons of mass destruction and that Saddam Hussein was linked to the 11 September attacks.

Saddam's failure to use chemical or biological weapons, and the allies' inability so far to find any, is particularly embarrassing for the Bush government, which doesn't want UN inspectors to return to Iraq – inspectors, coincidentally, who could see through the forged "proof" linked to the talkative Khidir Hamza.

Instead the allies want to send their own weapons inspectors. In a further coincidence, Khidir Hamza is reportedly planning to return to Iraq as part of General Jay Garner's reconstruction team. Can amazing discoveries of Iraqi bio-warfare be far behind?

SCHOOL CLOSURES

A BLINDING DECISION

JOSEPH CLARKE School for blind and partially-sighted children scored a near-perfect Ofsted inspection, is lauded by education experts throughout Britain and is the only state school catering for blind children across north London and much of the south-east. And now it's threatened with closure by the private firm that took over education in the London borough of Waltham Forest.

Pupils, parents and teachers are all horrified at plans by EduAction to close the school and move children into "mainstream" education. They say the firm's consultation exercise on its plans for the future of special needs schools in the area has been both useless and insulting. EduAction is planning a shake-up of all the area's special schools – shutting some and merging others.

At first glance closing Joseph Clarke School seems a surprising decision. With more than 80 percent of its 100 pupils coming from other education authorities, who have to pay to send children there, the school has been a money-spinner for Waltham Forest for years. The school also provides support (with things like printing Braille worksheets) for around 500 children in other schools.

But selling off the "family silver" in the shape of school buildings and land is a quick way for education companies to make a quick buck and maintain a healthy balance sheet in the short term.

The move is also likely to leave other education authorities at a bit of a loss. London boroughs and the county of Essex have all come to rely on the school for children with vision problems who are unable to cope in mainstream schools.

The firm says it is following government guidelines to move as many children as possible into mainstream schooling. It says its main priority is to educate children from the area – not children travelling in from elsewhere. Teachers suspect the real priority is the bottom line.

For the parents of Jason and Sean Morris, both visually impaired, the school closure is a nightmare. Jason, aged 10, started out in an ordinary primary school but his frustration started to cause behaviour problems and he was bullied. Both boys have thrived at the specialist school.

In 2000 Waltham Forest was identified as a failing education authority and EduAction was called in to sort things out. EduAction is an offshoot of the *Eye's* old friends, education company Nord Anglia – recently sacked by two schools in Kensington and Chelsea for its pisspoor administration of payroll and personnel.

The consultation period on the planned changes has just finished. Earlier this month Waltham Forest councillors voted down an opposition motion to discuss the consultation responses in full council. Now only the council's "cabinet" will be briefed.

ANGLIAN WATER

CASH ON TAP

ANGLIAN Water's five million customers are probably expecting money to start pouring out of their taps given the way the company continues to hand out cash to its shareholders.

During a complicated restructuring last July the water services company (AWS) was ring-fenced from the rest of Anglian Water Group (AWG), and £1.72bn of the group's debt was transferred to AWS. The debt paid for a £500m payout to investors. AWG was left to get on with developing its other interests – including running Norwich's housing, gas and electricity business and a variety of big PFI deals with nothing to do with water.

In March AWG chief executive Chris Mellor resigned under pressure from the board. Mellor received £350,000 in lieu of his 12-months' notice. The group's director of human resources described Mellor as "a very experienced and very highly regarded water man" but not the right person to take the business forward. Has the board forgotten that it's still running a water company?

Last week AWG treated shareholders to a £177m pay-out in an attempt to head off a buyout from German firm WestLB Principal Finance. With 75,000 shareholders, that's an average of more than £2,000 each.

You might now expect the industry regulator to question whether all this is good value for the water customers. But step forward Watervoice... a leading contender to win the most toothless watchdog in Britain award. Its only public response to the affair has been a feeble press release saying it was "reassured" that the pay-out to Mellor came from AWG and not the water services part of the business. So that's all right then.

With the Anglian region still suffering sewer flooding and extensive low water pressure, customers may wonder at AWG giving away so much money and getting rid of expertise like Mellor's.

MRC FAILS ITS MEDICAL

THE Commons science and technology committee has published a blistering report on the work of the Medical Research Council (MRC).

It finds the council, the main public funder of biomedical research with a £416m annual budget, guilty of poor financial management, poor planning and poor communication. Moreover its strategies for research support are misguided and it discriminates against young researchers and some specialisms. According to the committee, the MRC refuses far too many high-quality research applications in areas such as neuroscience and cancer, while pumping money into longer-term speculative projects like Biobank, the controversial scheme to collect medical records and DNA from 500,000 volunteers.

The committee also found that the MRC was sitting on funds it should have allocated. These include the extra £2.5m awarded by health minister Jacqui Smith over a year ago specifically for additional autism research. So far the MRC appears only to have organised seminars to discuss how the money might be allocated.

One project which certainly seemed to fit the criteria intended to compare 500 autistic children with 500 normal children to investigate several postulated causes and to help understand the development of the disease. Yet the MRC turned the project down because the study "would not properly advance the current state of knowledge about the epidemiology and causes of autism".

In fact it might have answered questions that are most exercising parents in the MMR debate. For as well as exploring gastro-abdominal problems in autistic children, researchers also wanted to look for the measles virus.

FOLLOW-UPS... FOLLOW-UPS... FOLLOW-UPS... FOLLOW-UPS...

■ **CAFCASS:** Lord chancellor Lord Irvine, who over a year ago promised to sort out Cafcass, the children and family court service, is now damned by his own feeble targets for the troubled agency.

They say that in the coming year 80 percent of children involved in care or adoption proceedings should be allocated a guardian or case worker within seven days; and that 95 percent of children involved in disputed divorce should be allocated a worker 10 weeks before the court date.

Before Cafcass was rushed into being, without proper resources or preparation, most children were allocated guardians within a day, never mind a week. Records for the north of England, for example, show that between 1997 and 1999, 90 percent of care cases and 94 percent of divorce cases were allocated on the same *day* and every single one of them within a week.

Under Cafcass some children are having to wait up to 12 weeks to be allocated a worker and some cases are dragging through the courts for months, adding to the children's distress.

Experienced guardians are continuing to leave in droves, with ill-prepared staff unable to take on the work. Without proper investment, Irvine's goals, which also govern training, reducing sickness absence and living within budgets, are little more than a wish list.

BARKER BIT

FOUND to be dishonest by a jury in the *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* trial, serial cougher Tecwen Whittock did the honourable thing and resigned from his lecturing post at Pontypridd College. Not all dishonest academics fall on their swords, however.

Richard Barker, professor of social work at the University of Northumbria, was found by a judge to have been maliciously dishonest in a case which wrecked two nursery nurses' lives and careers. Nevertheless, Barker continues to lead a university department and teaches undergraduates to be social workers.

Barker was head of a Newcastle inquiry team which wrongly found Dawn Reed and Christopher Lillie guilty of abusing children in their care. Last summer, Mr Justice Eady ruled that Barker and his colleagues – social worker Judith Jones, clinical psychologist Jacqui Saradjian and former social services director Roy Wardell – had been deliberately untruthful in writing the inquiry report. Reed and Lillie each won £200,000, the maximum permitted libel damages.

In his damning judgment Eady said his finding of malice was "...unavoidable. The team had made a number of claims in the report which they must have known to be false – some of them were blatantly false – which is indefensible. The claims cannot be explained on the basis of incompetence or mere carelessness." The four, he concluded, had "consciously... set out to misrepresent the state of the evidence available".

Only at a late stage of the trial did it emerge that Barker and co had reached a secret arrangement with the police. In return for access to all the videos of the children's interviews, they agreed not to criticise the police or social workers for breaching government guidelines and asking the children countless leading questions. In the final report Barker actually praised the quality of the interviewing.

Barker was repeatedly singled out for criticism by the judge. Eady said he was struck by Barker's "lack of objectivity and willingness to use his position to bully", which "put not only [Reed and Lillie] in danger, but several other quite innocent people".

Many of these people were represented by Unison's Kevin Hattam. Barker tried to prevent Hattam from representing his members during the inquiry, considering him unsuitable on the grounds that Hattam actually believed his members were innocent.

Despite unequivocal condemnation, Barker has neither resigned nor returned the money he was paid for the malicious report (the four authors received more than £360,000 between them). In fact he told the *Times Higher Educational Supplement* that he "cannot accept that I was malicious". The case was "a clash of two very different systems that use different language".

That is not how Eady saw it. He said: "I was unable to place reliance upon anything said by Professor Barker", who displayed "a cast of mind closed to all reason, whereby whatever piece of evidence may be produced, however inconsistent with the last, is perceived as supporting the basic unchallengeable datum that abuse occurred. It is not an unfamiliar cast of mind, but it is one not normally associated with university professors".

PICK UP A DEAD PENGUIN

PENGUIN expert Mike Bingham is being forced from his job at a power station by the Falkland Islands' Government (FIG) after revealing that over-fishing killed 100,000 penguins last year.

FIG's formal reasons for refusing his application for islander status and work permit paint an interesting picture of the Falklands regime and how it deals with criticism. The FIG says Mr Bingham "sought to discredit and bring into disrepute the state of the Falklands Islands environment and the role of the government in its protection." It also lists his attempts to win support from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Outrageous behaviour for a conservationist!

In 1996 Mr Bingham lost his job at Falklands Conservation after going public with the findings of a penguin population census. He took work at a power station and continued to research independently, publishing studies in peer-reviewed journals.

Meanwhile he received anonymous phone threats and several bizarre trumped up criminal accusations that were abandoned once they came to court (*Eye* 994). Then, last May, 100,000 penguins were found dead. Falklands Conservation said further research was needed, but Mr Bingham told the BBC the penguins had undoubtedly died of starvation.

In November Mr Bingham's application was turned down. His work permit just ran out. With no unemployment benefit in the islands, he expects to leave in June. Isn't this the sort of heavy-handed dictatorship from which the Falklands War was meant to protect the islands?

DOWN ON THE FISH FARM

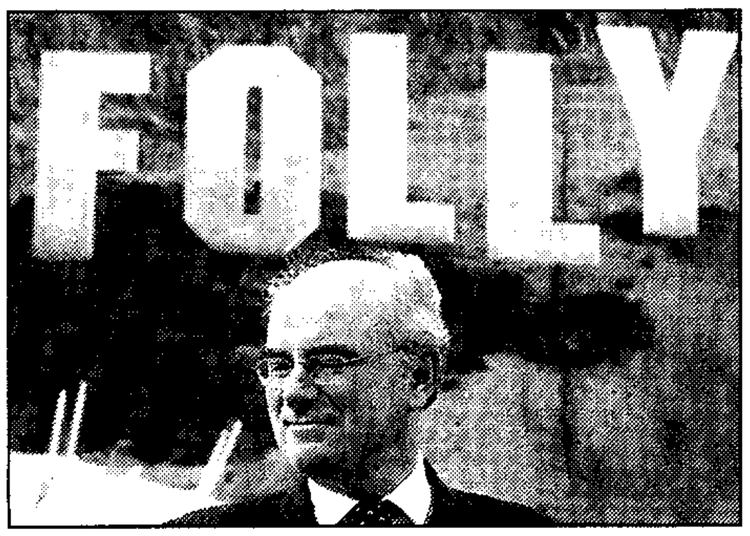
FORSYTH SAGA

SCOTTISH Tory leader David McLetchie, outlining policy on salmon farming in Scotland, claims the industry provides 11,100 jobs. Quite a leap of faith given the industry itself only boasts of 6,500 jobs.

McLetchie claims that a Tory administration would cut through the "bureaucracy and red tape" that is "breaking the back of the industry" through "ridiculous burdens". Funnily enough, one of the main architects of aquaculture in Scotland was none other than Tory secretary of state Michael Forsyth (1995-1997), who now admits his errors in failing to control fish farm expansion.

Now Lord Forsyth of Drumlean, he sponsored a recent Lords debate on the plight of Atlantic salmon and made this plea in a Scottish Sunday newspaper: "I once naively believed that farmed salmon would help save wild fish. Poorly managed farms have done enormous damage by allowing catastrophic escapes, nearly 400,000 last year alone. Young smolts setting off to feeding grounds are ruthlessly attacked by sea lice from farmed fish. The [Scottish] Executive's position is irresponsible, stupid and disingenuous."

Perhaps he was so hot under his ermine collar because smolts are being reared on the banks of the River Ettrick, a tributary of the Tweed, where Forsyth casts his fly for the majestic wild salmon. "There was an understanding, I thought, that no fish farms would be allowed in the East Coast. It turns out that the plan is to produce three to four million smolts [on the Ettrick] from non-native salmon."



Folly: The Tories' fishing policies

This confirms that more than a decade ago government and fish farmers did a deal whereby the farmers could do as they pleased with West Highland and Island wild salmon and sea-trout, including driving them to extinction, so long as they kept away from Scotland's major salmon streams: the Tweed, Tay, Dee and Spey.

Who fixed up this secret deal? Step forward... Michael Forsyth and his Tory party chums. If Forsyth wants to have "full and frank" discussions with his former junior minister, Lord Jamie Lindsay, who was in day-to-day charge of fish farming, he isn't hard to find. He's now the £70,000-a-year chair of Scottish Quality Salmon, the fish farmers' representative body.

PPPs

PIE IN THE SPY?

ELEVEN private firms have been long-listed to take over the training of Britain's spies and other highly skilled defence roles.

The ministry of defence plans to enter into public private partnerships (PPP) covering seven areas of training. As well as privatising the "security, languages, intelligence and photography" training unit, areas up for grabs include logistics, information systems, engineering and the training of military "red cap" police.

Frontrunners in the MoD's long-list include Group 4, Qinetiq and Raytheon/Serco. All the usual suspects in fact – although perhaps the MoD needs a reminder of who it is dealing with.

Qinetiq, now largely owned by the US-based Carlysle group (for which George Bush Snr is an advisor), showed its competence in defence matters last October when it "lost" a pallet of anti-tank missile warheads, mines and plastic explosives in the Bristol Channel (*Eyes Passim*).

Group 4 ran the Yarl's Wood asylum detention centre, destroyed by fire last February. It was criticised by firefighters for consistently failing to improve safety in the building – including a notorious failure to install a sprinkler system.

Serco is currently trying to transfer hundreds of former MoD staff working for the Warship Support Agency on to contracts issued in Guernsey in a patriotic attempt to avoid tax and national insurance (see last *Eye*). Other high-profile failures include the naming of the Serco-run Ashfield Young Offenders' Institute as Britain's worst jail by prison service director Martin Narey.

In a internal briefing the MoD says all the firms have demonstrated that they have the capacity to enter into partnership with the department. Makes one wonder how high the benchmark is...

Between now and December the MoD will hold discussions with the firms about the structure of any possible contracts – which could see one firm take on all seven training schools or a "packaging" deal splitting the training provision between them.

Another firm on the shortlist is WS Atkins, a company with a genuine expertise in the area of, er, road building. This is why Michael Jeffries, chief executive, has announced that Atkins will be putting in a bid to help rebuild Iraq as well.

You can contact Paul Foot on 020 7287 3183 or the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017

In the City

THE Serious Farce Office – if it is allowed – is expected to appeal the "undue leniency" of the undeserved soft suspended jail sentence passed on Facia fraudsman Stephen Hinchliffe by Old Bailey judge Jeremy Roberts last week.

Further legal advice is being obtained before the papers are sent to attorney general Lord Goldsmith for a final decision. But the SFO has already been advised that it should refer the non-custodial sentence to the court of appeal.

The SFO made it clear to Judge Roberts at an earlier hearing that while it was prepared to accept a guilty plea from Hinchliffe, it considered a custodial sentence essential after a £4m investigation since 1996. The plea bargain did not include an agreement to no jail time, which is what Hinchliffe wanted. The SFO had already rejected such a deal in discussions with the Facia fraudsman's lawyers.

In 2001, after just a night in jail before he was sentenced, Hinchliffe looked a very different man to the confident, bullying figure he had cut before and during his first trial for corruption. This time he made it clear, after two years inside, he did not want a second helping. He may well have pleaded not guilty without a deal. But that would have risked a further three-year sentence, Roberts indicated.

As the SFO would not agree to a suspended sentence, the defence asked Roberts to give an indication of his intentions. Roberts indicated that he would give a suspended sentence although aware of the SFO's objections.

Judge Roberts' main reason for sparing Hinchliffe appeared to be based on the fact that the public had had "substantial retribution" against the Facia chairman because he had already been jailed – for corruption not theft/fraud – and made bankrupt. "I think he has served enough time in prison," was the Roberts view. Hinchliffe has done two years of an original five-year sentence.

Despite this Roberts somehow felt he was sending out the message that "people who plunder their company's funds will end up in prison". Yet Hinchliffe has done no prison time for plundering Facia of at least the admitted £1.75m – only for corrupting a greedy and willing bank manager.

Contrast that Old Bailey sentence with the eight years handed out to accountant Ashley Hardy last November at Maidstone crown court for stealing £1.5m from his employers and investors which he spent on the good life – just like Hinchliffe. Hardy too is penniless and ruined but that did not save him even though he admitted his crimes from the start, unlike Hinchliffe who only pleaded guilty at almost the last minute.

Roberts was also influenced by the delays in bringing the prosecution and the likely cost of a lengthy trial which he put at £10m. Prosecution sources consider this far too high and suggest £1m as nearer the mark.

The SFO has only once before appealed a sentence. That was in 1997 over European Leisure when ludicrous community service sentences passed in 1995 on directors Michael Ward and Jeffrey Howarth for share ramping during a bid were criticised by the appeal court as too lenient and inappropriate. They were replaced by prison terms of two years and 20 months. Howarth successfully appealed to the European court of human rights. Ward is now hoping his case will be sent back to the court of appeal by the criminal cases review commission.

In Ward's case the appeal court judges felt he should be jailed even though – like Hinchliffe – he had already done time for a related crime (a year sentence in 1995 for lying to the SFO). The judges declared prison was appropriate because the share ramping involved "substantial dishonesty" and "people carrying out something like this should know they face a real chance of going to prison". Arguments that apply equally to Hinchliffe.

Hopefully the attorney general will agree that this sentence sends all the wrong messages and must be challenged. If delay and previous jail time are to determine sentences, the SFO and judges will need to consider not splitting cases into multiple trials – requests for "severance" of other defendants or charges are regularly made by defence lawyers – because of the inevitable delays this causes.

It may also encourage a move by the SFO away from the "total criminality" approach to the "quick hit" tactic being successfully used by American prosecutors with Enron, WorldCom and Health-South, concentrating on a few, simple to prove charges, fast arrests and guilty pleas or speedy trials. An approach that works but has yet to be tried out here.

THE Facia sentencing farce is not the only indication that judges are starting to see delay and cost as reasons for not jailing fraudsmen who plead guilty.

An even bigger unreported travesty occurred in January at the conclusion of the SFO prosecution of three defendants arising from an investigation into the Hungarian International Bank. The architect of the £550,000 fraud, accountant Roger Crow, was given a suspended sentence by Judge John Samuels QC at Blackfriars crown court, despite pleading guilty on day 35 of a trial which he had delayed on two occasions since being charged in 2000.

The HIB trial is a microcosm of what is wrong with the British way of dealing with fraud and how not just prosecutors, defendants and lawyers but also judges are to blame.

Crow was an executive at the London bank. He arranged for a printing press to be provided to a fellow defendant at the bank's expense. The fraud was discovered in 1996 when the London bank was closed by its owner, the Hungarian Central Bank, but was not reported to the SFO until 1998. Two years later Crow was charged.

The trial was initially set for 2001 but was delayed twice as a result of unsuccessful abuse of process applications – Crow claimed he was a fall guy for others. It was delayed a third time to last November because Judge Samuels was not available in August for medical reasons. A request to change the trial judge was refused. When the trial began it was again delayed by further legal argument. Then the first prosecution witness was in the box for 13 days, nine of them being cross-examined by Crow's counsel.

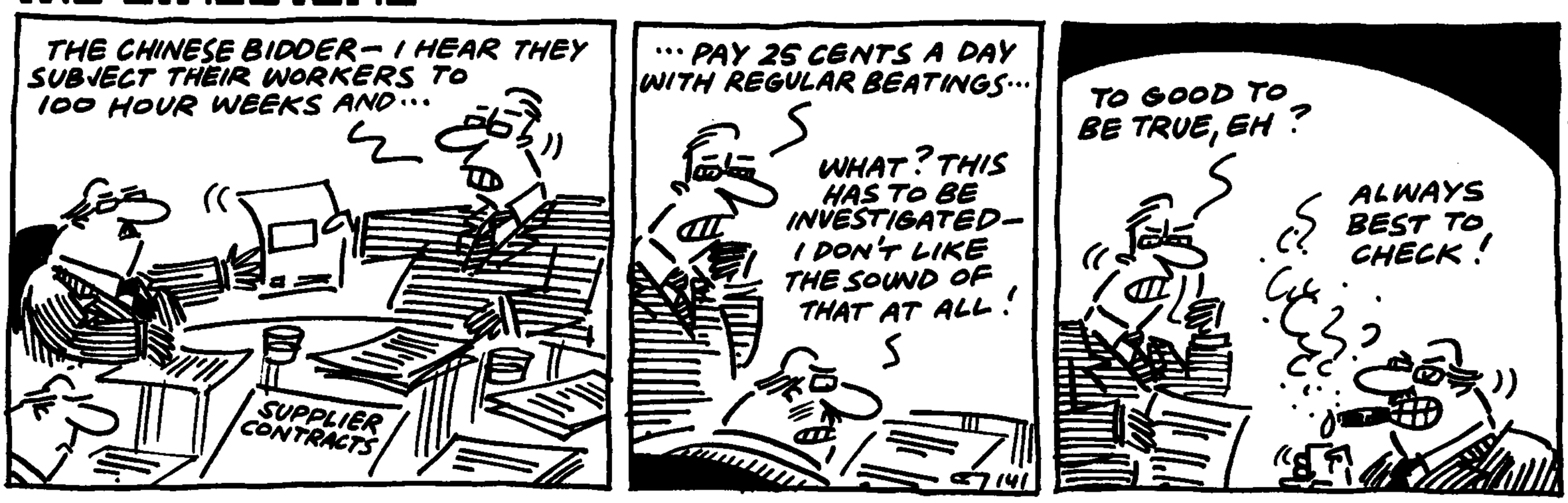
With Christmas approaching the judge clearly saw the possibility that the trial would exceed the three months estimated and delay a forthcoming insider-trading trial due to start in March. He made an unusual intervention. Judge Samuels suggested the SFO should consider dropping the case in the public interest (cost) while the defendants should consider pleading guilty. As an inducement the judge also indicated he was not in any case considering a prison sentence on conviction. His reasons included the delay in reporting the fraud and in prosecuting it, the cost and waste of resources and (surely a first) the absence of any media interest.

After the holiday break both sides declined his invitation. The show must go on. Then, after a ruling requested by the SFO limiting future cross-examination, Crow sacked his counsel and through his lawyers requested a new trial with a new QC. Samuels refused this request and further moves that would have delayed the trial until late 2003 or possibly 2004.

Only when it became clear that the trial would not be stopped did Crow plead guilty. (Had the trial been stopped, the SFO would have had to think very carefully about the cost of a new trial.) In the event Crow escaped a prison term. Samuels indicated that he had taken into consideration the fact that Crow faced a £100,000 claim from HIB who had delayed reporting the fraud preferring to bring a civil case first, that he would be struck off as an accountant and the impact on his family.

As far as Roger Crow was concerned that was certainly a result. He had received a 100 percent discount for a guilty plea despite forcing the taxpayer via the SFO to incur trial costs of perhaps £250,000 and investigation costs of £1m by stretching the trial out for seven weeks and the whole investigation and prosecution process by almost five years. Discounts are supposed to only

THE DIRECTORS — DREDGE & RIGG

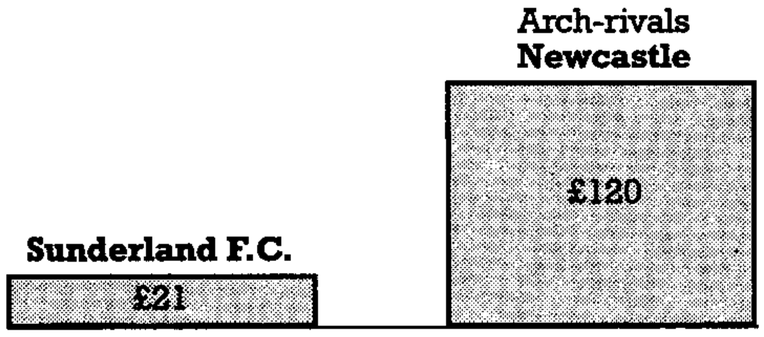

THE CHINESE BIDDER – I HEAR THEY SUBJECT THEIR WORKERS TO 100 HOUR WEEKS AND…
SUPPLIER CONTRACTS
… PAY 25 CENTS A DAY WITH REGULAR BEATINGS…
WHAT? THIS HAS TO BE INVESTIGATED – I DON'T LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT AT ALL!
TO GOOD TO BE TRUE, EH?
ALWAYS BEST TO CHECK!

Stock Horror

by 'Bruin'

Woe on the Wear

Value of £100 invested a year ago in...



be awarded where defendants plead guilty early and save the courts time and the taxpayer money.

With Hungarian International Bank, as with Facia, once again the wrong sentencing message was sent. Perhaps it is time all judges were sent a message about sentencing. That message is that fraud is "very, very serious" in the words of a federal judge in San Francisco who in December jailed a former Cisco Systems senior executive for six and a half years after he pleaded guilty to stealing $50m despite a defence plea of schizophrenia. Because decades after Woody Guthrie wrote, far more money is still stolen at the point of a pen than a gun.

FRENCH TV viewers are due to be entertained in May by a 30-minute documentary from cable station Canal Plus on the phoney pharaoh Mohamed Fayed.

One area the programme may examine is Fayed's donations to the political campaigns of his one time benefactor (and now M. le President) Jacques Chirac. What happened to the money raised by Chirac's Gaullist party when he was mayor of Paris and beyond is under investigation by French magistrates. Fayed freely admitted to associates that he had donated money to Chirac's cause who in turn awarded the owner of the Paris Ritz with a lease on the former home of the Duke of Windsor and supposedly offered him a French passport – very valuable now he has become a Swiss tax exile.

BROKERS ABN Amro managed to bargain down the fine imposed last week by the financial services authority (FSA) for rigging the closing prices of four British and German shares in 1998 – a wonderful example of speedy justice by the chief regulator.

As recently as November the FSA had advised ABN Amro that the penalty would be £1m. Further representations by ABN, who had put their hands up to the charges, resulted in the fine being cut to £900,000. The FSA also took disciplinary action – a £70,000 fine – only against Michael Ackers, the joint head of UK equity trading, for manipulating the price of Carlton Communications for New York institutional salesman Angelo Iannone on behalf of his clients Oechsle International Advisers. It took no action – no doubt for good reason – against Stephen Pettman, director of UK equities, who was initially accused of manipulating the price of British Biotech at Iannone's request for the same client.

"I HAVE a lot of connections here, not as much with New Labour but with the Conservatives," one of Russia's most wanted men, former oligarch Boris Berezovsky, tells the *Observer*.

These Tory friends are assisting the billionaire fight extradition on fraud charges. Could one of those unidentified supporters be Tory MP Gregory Barker? For two years from 1998, prior to becoming MP for Bexhill in 2001, Barker was "head of international communications" for Siberian Oil Co, better known as the Berezovsky-linked Sibneft which last week announced a merger with Yukos to form the number one Russian oil giant.

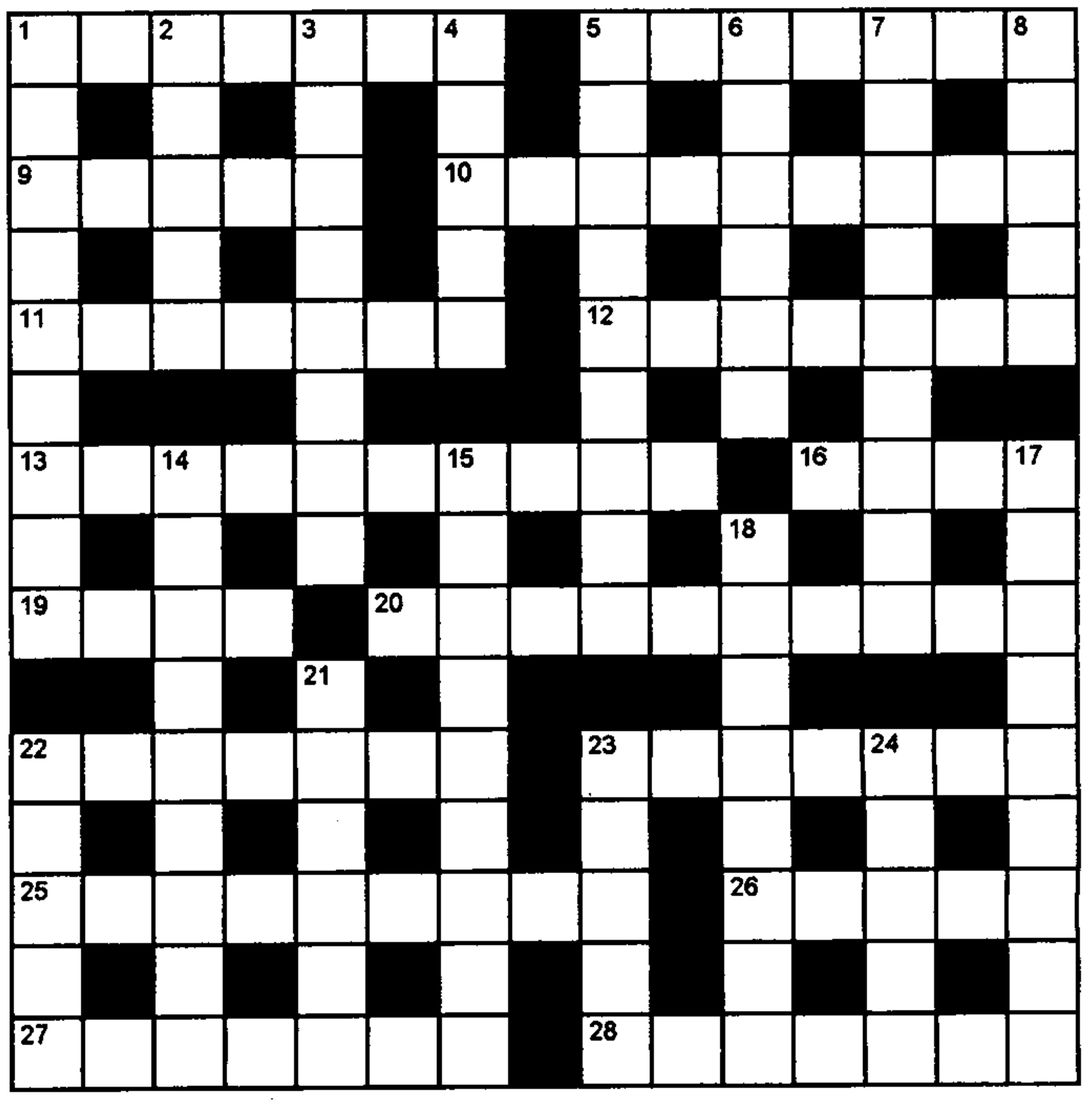
'Slicker'

EYE CROSSWORD 234

by Cyclops

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 9 May 2003.

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk



ACROSS

1 'Freed' city hospital taking old man! But there's a catch at first (7)
5 Almightily abandoned fire-fighter, not envious, accepts line (7)
9 God! Iain's first leader of Conservatives to jump ship! (5)
10 Controversial European – he's rejected by Jacko (9)
11 Humped new head – made a meal of it (7)
12T he old dauber, as the Spanish know Prince Philip? (2,5)
13/6 "Blasted civilians, getting in the way of US war aims," according to Pentagon? (10,6)
16 Couple with a Liverpudlian accent sound content (4)
19 American fighting machine needs new leader (4)
20 Prepared to have a bust up, being an inadequate bugger, maybe (10)
22 Rub up big vacuous bust of local dish (3,4)
23 Fan dancing? Get lost! Get lost! (4,3)
25 As Reg, sportingly given credit for knob control (9)
26 A stoned heap, one's coupled with Archer finally in prison (5)
27 The cleaner of two ways to get e.g. Rupert Murdoch's media fare (4-3)
28 Pissed model giving way to date, was a cheat (7)

DOWN

1 Hastings keen to give encouragement to the troops (6-3)
2 Hit it off and assumed the mating position? (3,2)
3 Horseshit collection from Brown: *The Man Entering the Breach* (4,4)
4 Had some tanked up editor (5)
5 When we 'never had it so good' with Glenda ego-tripping? (6,3)
6 See 13 Across
7 Former residence of Blair with small reduction for Brown's lot (9)
8 Barrage of insults "very restricting" – failed presidential candidate – "very" (5)
14 How some old Northerners got round Bolton gas explosion (9)
15 Creating peers makes Benn go barmy, holding back nothing (9)
17 Counsel, made to pay by judge, set new limits (9)
18 Mugged twice? False (3-5)
21 *Times*: "Brenda's a scrubber" (6)
22 Publicly named a wanted individual, like a newspaper (5)
23 *Sun*'s tip – 'The nation needs the like of Rebekah Wade' – bombed (5)
24 It sticks out transparently: there's nothing, that is, between Right and Left (5)

Crossword 233 winner: B. O'RIORDAN

ACROSS: 1 Pooh poohs 6 Plied 9 Bambi 10 Break a leg 11 In a stew 12 Travail 13 War in the Gulf 18 Trailer-trash 21 Egghead 23 Umpteen 24 Bloodbath 25 Amber 26 Effed 27 Empty talk.

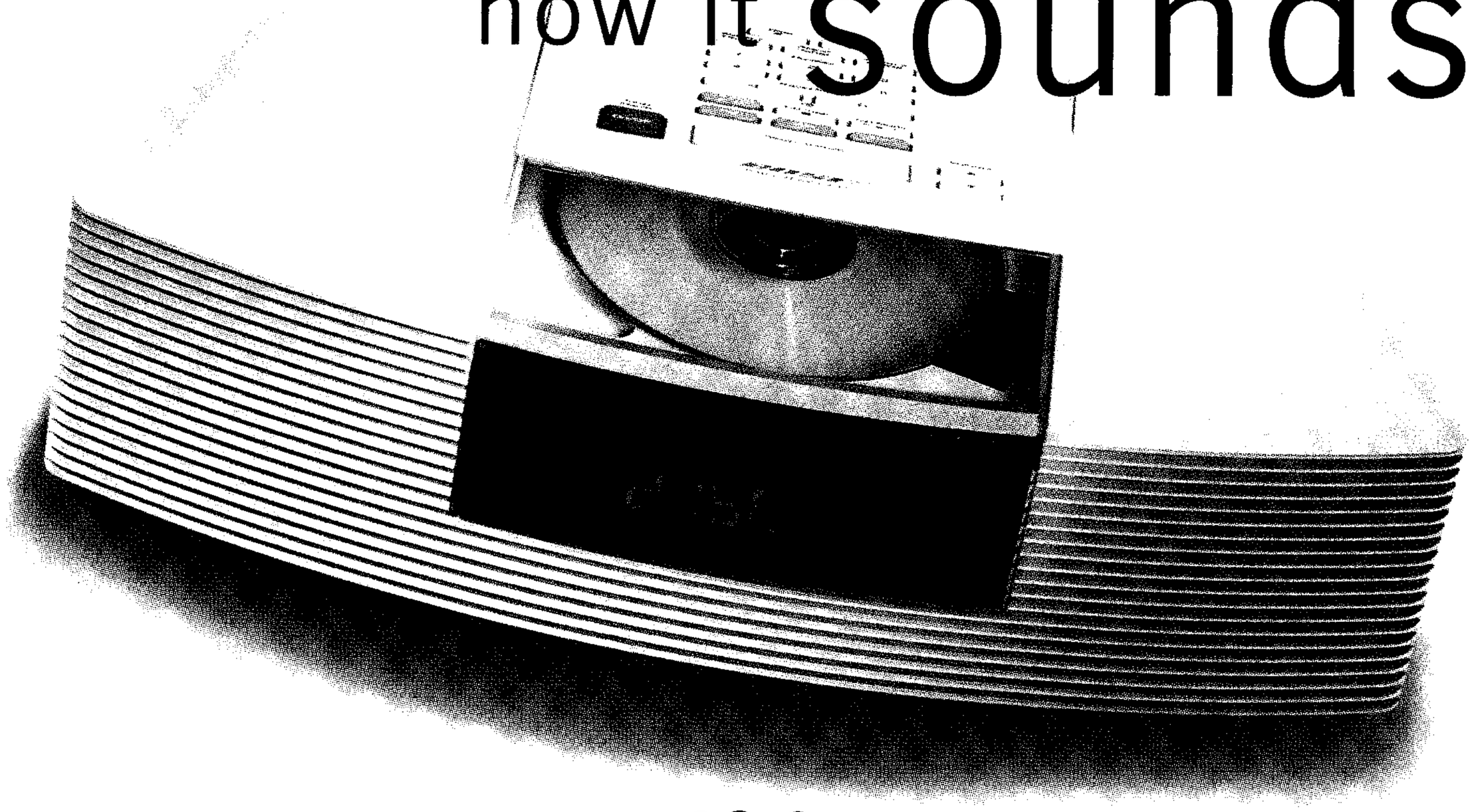
DOWN: 1 Public 2 Oompah 3 Paintball 4 Ox-bow 5 Spectator 6 Pukka 7 In league 8 Dog's life 14 Irradiate 15 Easy peasy 16 Atremble 17 Laugh off 19 Serbia 20 Anorak 22 Ended 23 Unhip.

The Bose® Wave® radio/CD. When we designed the Wave® radio/CD, we spent over a year making it one of the smallest, most compact systems available. One that fits almost anywhere. But despite all that, all anyone seems to talk about is how lifelike its sound is.

What they are really talking about is our patented* acoustic waveguide speaker technology. Its unique design means no other system can produce such room-filling sound from such a small enclosure. The result is music that is truly distinctive in its clarity and full, natural sound. So striking, the *Oregonian* called the Wave® radio/CD "one of those little unexplained miracles of acoustic physics."

Experience the lifelike sound of the Bose Wave® radio/CD yourself or choose the Bose Wave® radio without a CD player. Both are available directly from Bose, one of the most respected names in sound. And with our 30-day money-back guarantee, there is no obligation. Take advantage of our payment plan and make **10 low monthly payments with no interest charges from Bose.**** So why wait? Call today and hear for yourself what everyone is talking about.

To think, all that time making it small,
and all anyone talks about is
how it sounds.



Call 0800 022 044, reference 9494

Or return this coupon
to receive your free information pack.

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss _____

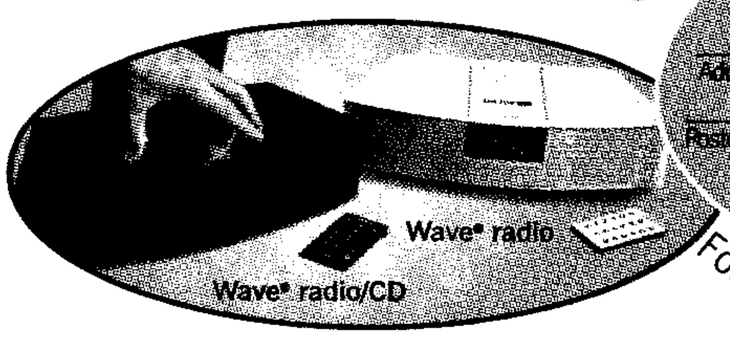
Address _____

Postcode _____ Day Tel. _____ 9494

Wave® radio/CD and Wave® radio are available in Platinum White or Graphite Grey.

Post to: Bose Ltd., Freepost EX 151, Exeter, EX1 1ZY
No stamp necessary.

If you do not wish to receive mailings from carefully selected companies, please advise us.



For information on all our products: www.bose.co.uk/9494

BOSE®
Better sound through research®

*Patents issued and/or pending in the US and certain EU countries. **Instalment payment plan available on credit/debit cards only. Your credit/debit card will be charged each month with 0% finance charge from Bose. In the event of a late payment, credit/debit card company interest charges may apply. Instalment payment plan not to be combined with any other offer or applied to previous purchases. Price and/or payment plan subject to change without notice. Delivery subject to product availability. ©2003 Bose Corporation. All rights reserved. The Wave® radio design is also a registered trademark of Bose Corporation in the US and other countries. Quote reprinted with permission from Wayne Thompson, *Oregonian*, 5/3/99.

Formations
UK Data Ltd
Company Formations

www.formacompany.com
Online
UK Company Formation Service

To form your new limited company, all you need to do is tell us the company name that you would like to use and then simply leave the rest to us.

Incorporation usually takes around 6 hours.

To ensure that your chosen name is available, please visit our website or telephone us to use our free name checking service.

Your Company incorporated for only £98 +vat

If you have not yet thought of a name or would like help choosing one, please look at our list of over 1000 suggested company names all of which are ready for immediate incorporation.

We also have many ready made and established companies which are ready to trade, and can be transferred to you within minutes.

Complete packages which include a limited company formation, registered office, internet domain name, 5 email addresses such as you@yourbusiness.com and the design and development of a website are also available.

- **Your new company incorporated within 6 hours**
- **Off-the-Shelf companies available**
- **Free online Company Name checking**
- **Fixed Fee £98 +vat**
- **Registered Office - Company Secretary - Nominee Services**
- **www.formacompany.com - 5000+ pages of information**

UK Data Ltd - 85 South Street
Dorking - Surrey - RH4 2LA
Telephone: **01306 888542**
Fax: **01306 877266**
email: **coform@formacompany.com**

SPEAK ANOTHER LANGUAGE? SPEAK IT BETTER.

•FRENCH •SPANISH •Italian •GERMAN

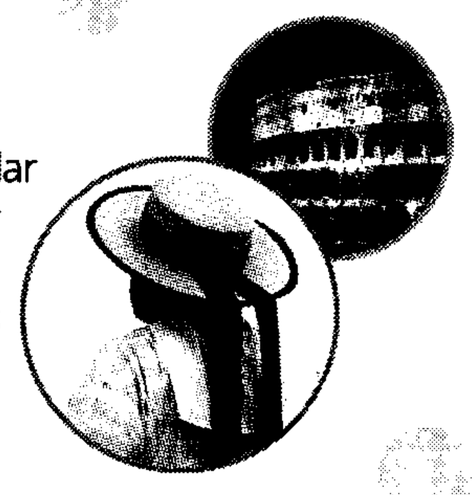
Audiomagazines for intermediate-to-advanced language learners

Now you can continue your language study month in and month out with *Champs-Elysées*, *Schau ins Land*, *Acquerello italiano*, and *Puerta del Sol*, internationally acclaimed audiomagazines unlike anything for language learners you've ever seen.

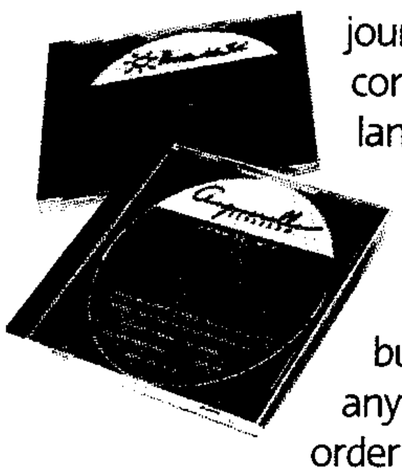
"...better than a language course." –About.com

Authentic Radio-Style programmes

Each monthly (Spanish & Italian appear every 2 months) audiomagazine, hosted by popular native broadcasters, consists of an hour long radio-style programme on audiocassette or CD. An accompanying 60-70 page magazine contains a full printed transcript, a glossary averaging 600 words & expressions translated into English, plus scores of background notes on people, places, events, and grammatical issues.



On-going Language Learning in an Entertaining Cultural Context

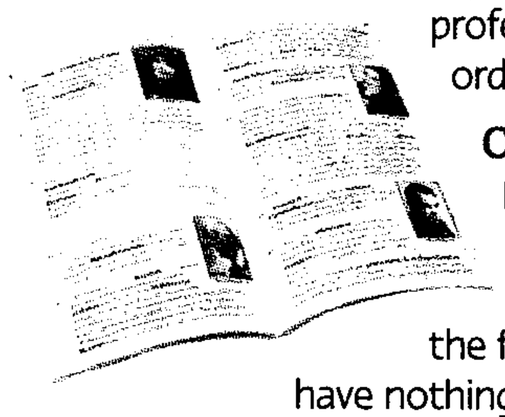


You'll hear original authentic interviews with politicians, writers, artists, sportsmen, journalists, celebrities, and segments covering current events and issues, and insights into contemporary culture and beloved traditions. By giving you an opportunity to hear the language as it's really spoken, we help you expand your vocabulary and vastly improve your ability to understand the spoken language.

The Most Flexible Way to Perfect Your Language Skills

Because each audiomagazine is portable, it's easy to integrate language study into your busy life. Work on fluency while commuting, walking the dog, exercising, cooking dinner, anytime and anywhere you want! If you need or want to make faster progress you can order the optional study supplements which are work sheets containing innovative listening exercises and grammar drills, and are available for each issue with the answers included.

Over and over again we are told there is no better product for sophisticated language learners. Why not find out for yourself what thousands of business people, teachers, diplomats, and professionals across the world are raving about. Just fill in the order form below, ring us, or order online.



Order Risk Free! Subscribe today!

DOUBLE MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE: Take 6 weeks to try your first edition. If it doesn't totally reenergize your language study, let us know and we will completely refund your money — you can even keep your first issue — so no returns hassle. Secondly, if ever in the future you decide it's not for you, we'll send you a refund for any issues not mailed. You have nothing to lose.

Champs-Elysees, Spike Island, 133 Cumberland Road, Bristol BS1 6UG

Champs-Elysées AUDIOMAGAZINES

YES, Please rush me my first audiomagazine!

Champs-Elysées (French)	☐ 5 monthly editions on tape, £55	☐ On CD, £65	☐ Supplement, add £15
	☐ 11 monthly editions on tape, £99	☐ On CD, £121	☐ Supplement, add £33
Schau ins Land (German)	☐ 5 monthly editions on tape, £55	☐ On CD, £65	☐ Supplement, add £15
	☐ 11 monthly editions on tape, £99	☐ On CD, £121	☐ Supplement, add £33
Acquerello italiano (Italian)	☐ 6 bi-monthly editions on tape, £69	☐ On CD, £81	☐ Supplement, add £18
Puerta del Sol (Spanish)	☐ 6 bi-monthly editions on tape, £69	☐ On CD, £81	☐ Supplement, add £18

(All prices include P&P within the UK and overseas)

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms _____

Address _____

_____

☐ **Cheque enclosed** (payable to Champs-Elysées Ltd.)

Debit my VISA/Mastercard/American Express/Eurocard/Switch/Diners

Card No. _____ **Expiry Date.** ☐☐/☐☐ **Issue** ☐☐ (Switch)

Credit card orders may be faxed on 0117 929 2426 Outside the UK call (44) 117 929 2320

POST TO: CHAMPS-ELYSEES, DEPT. PE0205, FREEPOST LON 295, BRISTOL, BS1 6FA

WWW.AUDIOMAGAZINE.COM 0800 833 257

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

and we'll send you a FREE BOOK

from the classic Private Eye Colemanballs series (numbers 1-10).

Our subscription is still only £19* – that's an amazing 43% off the cover price.

From 16 May Private Eye will increase to £1.30 per issue –
SO BEAT THE PRICE RISE AND SUBSCRIBE NOW.

Colemanballs

Collections from Private Eye's regular column of verbal howlers from the world of broadcasting.

"We've had to beg, steal and borrow computers."

CHIEF CONSTABLE

"Picking the team isn't difficult, it's who to leave out."

KEVIN KEEGAN

"...and a massive leap for Liquid Gold of one place to number four..."

TONY BLACKBURN

"My mum says I used to fight my way out of the cot. But I can't remember. That was before my time."

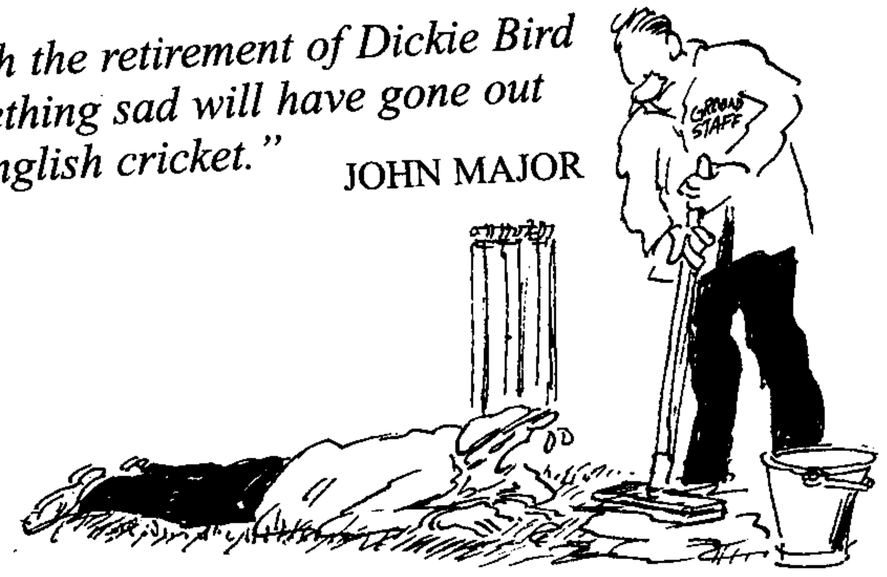
FRANK BRUNO

"And so he walks away with £250,000. That's the way to win a million on this show."

CHRIS TARRANT

"With the retirement of Dickie Bird something sad will have gone out of English cricket."

JOHN MAJOR



Order now on our 24-hour credit card hotline: 0870 750 1714 (quoting code N1079).

Overseas callers: + 44 (0) 1795 414 871. Alternatively order online at www.private-eye.co.uk (click on subscriptions).

Offer closes 10 June and applies to new subscribers only.

Or complete this order form and send with your payment to: Private Eye Subscriptions, P.O. Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 8FA

Please send PRIVATE EYE for one year (26 issues) PLUS A FREE BOOK FROM THE COLEMANBALLS SERIES to:

Title Initial Surname

Address

Postcode

Your daytime telephone no:
(in case we have a query with the order)

Your email:

☐ Yes, I would like to receive news of other products and services that maybe of interest to me.

☐ UK* £19 ☐ Europe and Eire £27 ☐ Airmail (rest of world) £35
Overseas subscribers can also pay by International Money Order

☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to PRIVATE EYE **or**

☐ Please charge my MasterCard/Visa/Switch (Issue no:_____)

Card number

SWITCH ONLY

Expiry date

Signature Date

Source code: N1079

specialEYEs

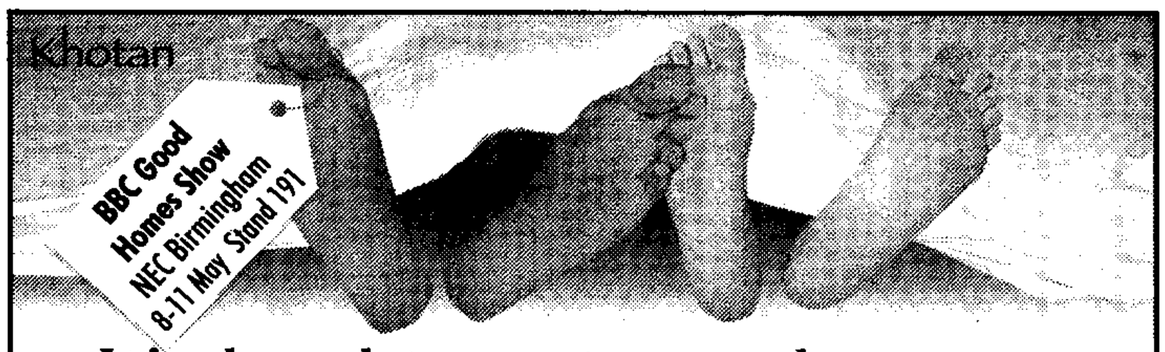
clubs

The
Blue Angel Club
welcomes you and your friends for a really unforgettable evening. Drink, or dine and dance in luxurious surroundings and be served or entertained by our Angels.
Open Monday to Friday from 6.30pm until late
Membership not required.
17 Little Portland Street, London W1N 5DE Tel: 020 7636 2178

meeting people

www.ivorytowers.net
The new intelligent online **friendship and matchmaking site**, for alumni, postgraduates and students of all eras.
It's a new way of doing an old thing.
Free Trial Period

luxury goods



It's hard to get up when you have the luxury of a silk duvet!
LUXURY SILK DUVETS
100% long fibre pure silk filled handmade duvet in a 100% combed cotton satin casing
0845 4502248
MANDARINA TEXTILES
www.mandarina.co.uk
Conforms to British Standard BS5335, Part 1
Naturally Hypoallergenic

travel

Tenerife Club Class
Accommodation & Flights
Up to 60% discount off High Street brochure prices when you book direct with the Owners privately managed accommodation database
- Club Atlantis
- Altamira
- Oasis Apts
- Sunset Bay
- Sur Y Sol
- Los Diamantes
- Villamar
- Los Olivos

UK Customer Services
Open 11am –11pm: 7 days a week
Tel: 0845 6018132
www.teneriferesortdirector.com
VISA MasterCard

GOING OVERSEAS ?!
Cheapest crossings with perfect accommodation
0800-1691772
info@britishferry.com
www.britishferry.com

meeting people

...and suppers too!
Onlylunch
ONLY LUNCH
the professional introduction service
HOW PEOPLE LIKE YOU
MEET PEOPLE LIKE YOU
0800 908900
www.onlylunch.co.uk

★ STOCKBROKERS • DOCTORS • ADVERTISING • ACCOUNTANTS • ARCHITECTS ★
MARKETING • DESIGNERS
drawing down *the* moon
PERSONAL INTRODUCTION CONSULTANTS - THE FIRST AND FINEST
"a partner for life...that's where Drawing Down the Moon comes in"
FINANCIAL TIMES
020-7937 6263
www.drawingdownthemoon.co.uk
Head Office: Adam & Eve Mews, Kensington. *City Office:* Cannon Street
24 hours. Member ABIA. Est. 1984
★ MEDIA COMPANY DIRECTORS • LAWYERS • PR • BANKERS • SCIENTISTS ★
★ EDUCATIONALISTS • WRITERS

swimming pools

Swimming pool and pond owners

Have you tried Dick Bodgit, Specialist in filling in swimming pools?

Your pool keeps going green, the children have left home, you don't swim much and when you do, your eyes sting. You spent Easter scrubbing, back-washing and purifying.

Your swimming clothes are faded and your hair is damaged. You can't get your pump to circulate due to filter clogging, and you know that when you get back from holiday, you have to start again. Or maybe you can't see those lovely fish.

You can ring old Bodgit and he'll fill it in for a grand or two....

Or why not visit Floatron UK's web site and discover how for £250.00 you can have a crystal clear pool or pond all year round - with just ten minutes attention each week, and save 80% of the chemical costs by using Floatron - the only solar powered portable pool and pond purifier that's the size of a Frisbee and comes with an extensive two year warranty.

So there is a way around having to teach your friends how to do chemistry whilst you're on holiday, or having to pay someone more than you earn to eventually come and sort it out.

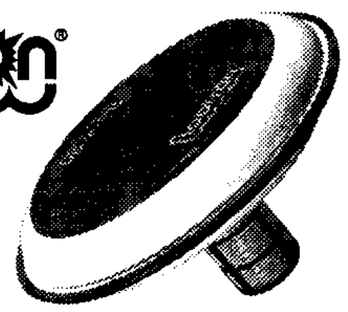
You can call Dick Bodgit for filling in, or help the environment and your pool and spa users by emailing info@floatron.co.uk

Visit our web site www.floatron.co.uk or contact me on 01256 770246 for further information.

ps. Floatron also controls algae and bacteria in water features and fish ponds.

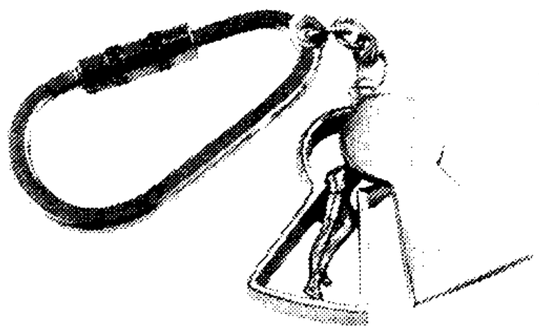
Yours,
Richard Gibbins
Richard Gibbins

floatron®
Floatron UK
£250.00
incl. p+p



gifts

EROTIC JEWELLERY & GIFTS



High quality erotic jewellery and gifts in silver, gold and platinum.
Beautifully detailed, hand-sculpted, miniature works of art,
Commissions undertaken.
Phone, email or write for a free catalogue

EG eroticgifts.org
PO Box 6500, Oakham
Rutland. LE15 9ZA
Tel: +44 (0)1572 822405
Email: info@eroticgifts.org
Website: www.eroticgifts.org

surveillance

DO YOU *REALLY* KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON?

SUSPECT SOMETHING'S GOING ON? FIND OUT–WITHOUT BEING FOUND OUT!
Disloyalty can be dangerous. It's often damaging and invariably hurtful. Commercially, it's usually expensive. You may not like the idea of using 'bugging' equipment but it can heighten your awareness and help you anticipate. You'll be amazed how we conceal microphones and tiny cameras in the most innocent and ordinary everyday objects.

LORRAINE ELECTRONICS SURVEILLANCE
716 Lea Bridge Road, London E10 6AW.
Fax: 020 8558 1338
Central London Showroom:
59 South Audley Street, W1K 2QN
Web Site: www.lorraine.co.uk
TEL: 020 8558 4226

education

£40,000 a Week?

Top professional footballers earn this. Top freelance editors and proofreaders don't. But they can earn £20 an hour. What's more, the pressure is less and you're unlikely to damage your metatarsal. Call now for a free prospectus on our courses

0800 328 8396

Chapterhouse, 1 Southernhay West, Exeter EX1 1JG
www.chapterhousepublishing.com

graphic design

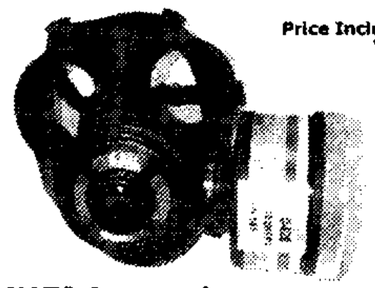
topjohnnybanana

FREELANCE
GRAPHIC DESIGN
AND ARTWORK

Telephone:simon
01992 511530
07736250110

protection

Gas Masks - £99



Price Includes P&P and VAT

NATO Approved

Don't give the terrorist the chance to harm you or your family. Protection for all against nuclear,bio-chemical and smoke. Not to be confused with ineffective paper face masks.
Your opportunity to stick two fingers up to the terrorist!
For MAXIMUM protection contact...

www.gas-masks-uk.com
02380 252955

Don't send Flowers...

send r★fur

and your message will last forever...

Birthdays, Anniversaries, Good Luck? Whatever the occasion, show them you care, send the bear! **r★fur** carries your personal message in his rucksack with pride and style. And he's delivered overnight** to the destination of your choice

CALL 0870 755 7387
OR VISIT www.sendthebear.com

ONLY £35*

* Plus postage & packing
** UK Mainland next working day delivery by Royal Mail Special Delivery Service. Overseas destinations available at extra cost

Approx 20cm tall. r-fur © Be Bear Designs 2002 - all rights reserved.

OM SAI RAM

BESPOKE
SUITS & SHIRTS

Hours 10.00am to 8.00pm (By appointment only.) Please Email, fax or call us in HONG KONG for an appointment with MR.RAJA DASWANI or alternatively call his suite during his visit. If Mr Daswani is unavailable or not checked in when you call, please leave your Tel number and he will be glad to return your call. *APPOINTMENTS CAN ALSO BE TAKEN FOR UK VENUES ON TEL: 01635 574 233*

A suit that measures up

...at a price you can afford

LADIES

1 Wool Suit
1 Silk Blouse

All from £188

GENTS

1 Super Fine Wool Suit
1 Blazer or Sports Jacket
1 Matching Pair of Slack
2 Silk ties

All from £188

COME ALONG FOR A FITTING

Raja Daswani will be offering his unique tailoring service at the following venues:

London – Novotel London – **May 2-14**
10 Pepys Street, London EC3 Tel: 020 7265 6000 Fax: 020 7265 6060

London – Sheraton Park Tower – **May 5-11**
101 Knightsbridge, London SW1 Tel: 020 7235 8050 Fax: 020 7235 8231

London – Hilton Paddington Hotel – **May 7-9**
146 Paed Street, London W2 Tel: 020 7850 0500 Fax: 020 7850 0600

London – Four Seasons Hotel – **May 12-14**
46 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, London
Tel: 020 7510 1999 Fax: 020 7510 1998

Bristol – Bristol Marriott Hotel – **May 10-11**
City Centre, 2 Lower Castle Street, Old Market, Bristol
Tel: 0117 929 428 Fax: 0117 927 6377

RAJA FASHIONS

34-C Cameron Rd., Ground Floor, Kowloon, Hong Kong
Email: raja@raja-fashions.com
URL: http://www.raja-fashions.com Tel: (852) 2366 7624 Fax: (852) 2369 2807
APPOINTMENTS CAN ALSO BE TAKEN FOR UK VENUES ON TEL: 01635 574 233
Customs duties and VAT not included, free alteration and replacement. No Refunds

PRIVATE EYE

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

020 7837 4566

£2.40 per word (£24 min charge)
Border £12 Box Number £12
Two weeks repeated on Private Eye's Website (www.private-eye.co.uk): £10
All charges VAT inclusive
Reply to Box Numbers at address below

Deadline for next issue: MAY 7

private-eye@communicationsteam.com
Fax: 020 7923 5401
Website: www.private-eye.co.uk

Communications Team, Exmouth House, 3-11 Pine Street, London EC1R 0JH

EYE ART

BLANK SPACE BLANK SPACE Blank Space Blank Space Blank Space – BOUGHT BY HSL AS ART.

EYE BET

A GAMBLER'S DREAM – bet like a pro and make big dough. Free info pack 08700 885683 extension 888 – www.secretsystem.20m.com

EYE BUYS

PRIVATE EYE BACK ISSUES: Original copies available direct from PRIVATE EYE. A UNIQUE RECORD OF OUR TIMES. AN UNUSUAL BIRTHDAY PRESENT. Issues available from the 1960s to the present day from as little as £5.00 for an original magazine (inc p&p). Availability and orders online at www.private-eye.co.uk Click on "back issues" Or send your order (including payment by cheque) to: PRIVATE EYE Back Issues, P.O. Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA.

EYE COLLECT

PLEASURE AND INVESTMENT. Autographs and memorabilia. Call Europe's largest dealer. Freephone 0800 731 0852 or www.frasersautographs.com

69/70'S CONCERT MEMORABILIA and sheet music wanted. Cash paid. Phone 07736 835875. E-mail plasticletters@msn.co.uk

OLD FOOTBALL programmes wanted (pre-1960s) CASH PAID. Telephone: 020 8306 2194. E-mail: david.sturge@btopenworld.com

EYE ESCAPE

MALLORCAN PROPERTIES – 00 34 660 980 556. Not all estate agents are Bestards. www.cjbestard.com

13thC MANOR HOUSE. Parties/ reunions. Sleeps 24. Tennis/Swimming. Services as required. Idyllic setting Somerset/ Devon border. Tel 0870 752 4501. www.gerbestonemanor.com

KEEP YOUR SUNNY SIDE UP! Try the real thing @ Colwall Park Hotel, Malvern. Gourmet breaks from £69.95pppn 2+nts. 01684 540000 – www.colwall.com

TRULY AUSTRALIA, truly different. Tailor-make your own holiday. Visit – www.trulyAustralia.com

GREECE – CYCLADES ISLANDS. Mykonos (direct flights), Paros, Naxos, Ios, Santorini – plus a dozen quiet ones. SIMPLY SPECIAL. Simply Simon Holidays. ATOL 2578, 020 7373 1933.

COTSWOLD GLIDING CLUB – 5-day holiday course inclusive of all flying and instruction. Prices from £275. Tel 01285 760415 for brochure - see www.cotswoldgliding.co.uk

DISCOVER RURAL ANDALUCIA & SOUTH PROVENCE Houses with pools close to Granada, coast & skiing, very affordable rates. French accommodation close to St-Tropez, Port Grimaud & Nice. For further details please phone 01535 271184 or 07836 613070. Or better still visit www.valle-de-lecrin.com E -mail; ashdown_mc@compuserve.com

THE BEST VILLA IN FLORIDA, ALLEGEDLY. Beautiful large villa 10 mins from Disney, 20 mins from airport, sleeps 10, own private pool, overlooking lake. From £500 pw. 0161 775 7676 or www.sunridgevilla.co.uk

HOLIDAY COTTAGE, one double bedroom, one single. Glastonbury, Somerset. Views over the abbey, lively town centre location. £180 p.w. All utensils supplied. Tel 01234 211606 or E-MAIL AbbeyGlast@aol.com for brochure.

PROVENCE (NEAR UZES). Magnificent estate. 4-bedroom house, 3-bedroom house, 1-2 bedroom cottage, 1-bedroom apartment available separately or rented together. 2 swimming pools Exquisite setting, location. Views, tranquility, lavender, etc. Tel: 0033 4 66 790984 or E-mail obrien.saint.castor@wanadoo.fr

SEEKING AN EXISTENCE which makes (more) sense, away from all the hype, artificiality and bullsh**t. www.vergel-alpujarra.com

SEE SOUTHERN AFRICA. Personalised tours for every budget and interest. 0788 0631176 – satours@blueyonder.co.uk

EYE LET

CHIPPING CAMPDEN – historic houses to let suitable 2-16 people. Log fires and fully equipped for weeks and weekends. Telephone 020 7736 1536.

SEE THE REAL New York! Friendly hotel alternatives: private B&B's and apartments. Safe/ central. www.CitySonnet.com, tel: 001 212 614-3034, fax: 001 425 920 2384.

EYE FLY

FLIGHT OPTIONS – telephone booking service. Tel: 01432 851062, Fax: 01432 850722, HENRY ROGERS, ATOL 3793.

EYE DINE

DUCK CONFIT & FOIE GRAS from S.W. France at everyday prices. Confit Direct 01938 553478 – www.confitdirect.co.uk

LIKE CHINESE FOOD? Chef cooks delicious Yunnan & Sichuan meals in your home. Feng: 07919 975-712, email: twohorseskitchen@yahoo.co.uk

EYE DRINK

QUALITY ROSÉ WINE – 14 different wines. Devigne Wines 01938 553478 – www.devignewines.co.uk

TAKE ROSÉ SERIOUSLY? Rosé Wine Weekends – Languedoc. Tasting & learning, vineyard visits, guest speakers. Accommodation/cuisine included. Info: www.drink-pink.com – E-mail: sbraddock@drink-pink.com. Tel: +33 (0)468 439970.

EYE DETECT

LINK INVESTIGATIONS – Private And Commercial Investigators Tracing, Surveillance, Staff Vetting, Matrimonial, Debugging, geology, house checks, DNA checks etc. Tel: 01306 880707 Fax: 01306 888077 E-mail: info@linkinvestigations.co.uk Web Site: www.linkinvestigations.co.uk

SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT – Manufacturer & Supplier of surveillance equipment. GSM Infinity Room Bug £199.00 – PC Spy Hardware based no software £59.00 – Professional Bug Detectors from only £199.00 – 9 Hour Digital Recorder for use in meetings and for telephones £149.00. WWW.SPYSTOREUK.COM Tel: 0208-968-0227, E-Mail: info@spystoreuk.com

EYE EARN

www.iwantmorethanthis.com – high income from home. 0151 728 9435.

£55,486 P.A. TAX FREE www.brimardon.com – 0800 389 8767 established 18 years.

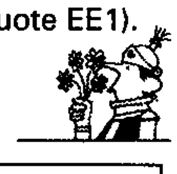
GOT A COMPUTER? business opportunity – www.job4u.co.uk

NEVER SEEN BEFORE. Award winning highly lucrative online Microsoft training company -- virtually runs itself. Guaranteed very small investment returned with undreamed of potential. 01932 230936.

NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY Registration and Full Details £25, SAE for information. FunWithText Limited. Box 0579.

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU KNOW – it's who you know. Earn commissions from introductions. Register free at thegoyagroup@aol.com (quote EE1).

EYE FINANCE



FILM PRODUCTION COMPANY requests funding, sponsorship, for short comedy film. PHONE 07812 097069.

EYE HELP

DEBT ADVICE – 08000 433287. David & Co or www.debtadvisers.co.uk

STOP SMOKING GUARANTEED. One session. Other problems sensitively addressed – 020 7357 9905.

SOLICITORS NEGLIGENCE CASES – CLAIM ONLINE www.proneg.co.uk or call 0800 052 3620.

ANTIQUES RESTORED – by people who know how. www.lawrencebrass.com

THINKING OF STARTING your own business? Free accountant's report. Register at thegoyagroup@aol.com (quote EH1).

www.OwnBase.com – mutual support for people who work from home.

SPEECHWRITING by Britain's leading professional. Laughter fully guaranteed! Corporate, Social, Political. Strictly confidential. Visa/Mastercard. Call MITCH MURRAY – 01624 622660.

ACCOMMODATION ADDRESS private, discreet, confidential mail/message-holding service, REGENT STREET. Established 1979. 020 7580 4242. E-mail: enquiry@hold-everything.com – www.hold-everything.com

WANT TO LAUGH, ETC? Festival? Folk Club? Posh do? Book JOHN BILSBOROUGH. www.thefunnypoet.co.uk

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY CLAIMS. Lost out due to bad advice? Why don't you sue your adviser? Contact GORVINS SOLICITORS and we'll do it for you. FREEPHONE 0800 214531 or E-mail enquiries@gorvins.com SOLICITORS NEGLIGENCE CASES - CLAIM ONLINE www.proneg.co.uk or call 0800 052 3620.

SUCCESS – is it eluding you? Experienced occultist will help. Ring 020 8946 9616 for details. Many happy and satisfied clients. Actors especially welcome.

SORT IT! Obsessive-compulsive organises files, archives, libraries. Business or personal, computer or paper. Free quote. 07771 562863 – sorted@meister.com

EYE HOMES

NORFOLK ENCHANTS... of finding homes like these anywhere else! www.countyproperties.com

EYE HOME HUNT

DANISH/AMERICAN COUPLE – spiritual, quiet, nonsmokers. Molecular biology graduate student/creative professional seek 2-3 bedrooms + balcony. Will trade marketing consulting/talent management/advice for reduced rent. £850 pcm in W1, W2, W8, W10, W11, NW3, NW6. 07768 863007.

EYE HEAR

JUKEBOX PARTY HIRE. CDs and/or 7" vinyl. Including ROCKOLA BUBBLER. £140+ delivered. 020 8318 2852.

EYE JOIN

ARE YOU ONE OVER THE EIGHT AND GONE BEYOND THE FRINGE, or have you just Come Again? Possibly both, probably neither, but you are certainly ready to join the PETER COOK APPRECIATION SOCIETY. Four fanzines p.a stuffed with rare material (like bendy lead) and an inaudible screaming badge, all for a piddly £8. PCAS, 64 Pitchford Street, Stratford, London E15 4RX.

NEW POLITICAL PARTY for the under 50s. Activists and supporters wanted. Tel: 01202 267363.

EYE LOVE

LITERATE PROFESSIONAL, 40y, WLTM arty, slim, curvy woman, 25-35y. Ldn/Mids/Nth. Email: cah0831@yahoo.co.uk

PASSIONATE, ACADEMIC, liberal female, 32, seeks similar male, 34-46, who is also empathetic, communicative, proactive and progressive – ballet-tanzerin@danceart.net

GOOD LOOKING London woman, 53, wants to return to countryside and invites suggestion/offer from potential patron. Box 0678.

SHORT, FAT, BORING woman, 60, seeks man with money and sense of humour. sfbw@whsmithnet.co.uk

CULTURED EDUCATED lady seeks similar gentleman with pots of money, large willy, and house in the country. Fun and friendship leading hopefully to relationship. evisu666@hotmail.com

HANDSOME, hunky northerner, 49, seeks classy, gentle lass for rural walks. Box 0379.

LADY IN BLACK, interested in the arts, 35+, w.l.t.m. actor, 30-45. Box 0479.

ELEGANT, attractive, intelligent woman (50) seeks generous gentle gentleman to cherish and protect her. Box 0879

LATE 50S LONDON professional man in semidetached marriage seeks woman 35 to 50 for fondness and fondles. quovadisx@virgin.net

LONDON BASED, fun loving, successful, 43 yr old English guy, 6ft all, slim, well spoken, generous and not too bad looking, (modest) seeks mistress. The "ideal candidate" will be slim, attractive, vivacious and between 20 and 30. Reply to london.dude@btopenworld.com

GLAMOROUS, ATTRACTIVE lady, 35, seeks a kind, generous, cosmopolitan mentor 42+ who desires an exclusive paramour. London. Glamour8869@aol.com or Box 0179.

ATTACHED GENTLEMAN, 50, seeks chocolate complexioned lady friend. S. Wales, Bristol, M4 – 0787 6294170 OR briefencounter@bulletinmail.com

FUN LOVING wealthy bachelor in late 50s looking for lady 30-40. Full time companion. Wages+ – djvenables@aol.com

BEAUTIFUL, ELEGANT lady, 40s, seeks solvent gentleman. Discretion assured and expected. Box 0679.

WICKEDLY MODEST, arguably rather good-looking professional chap, late 40s, slim, fit, still with teeth and hair, creative, varied interests – seeks clever, pretty fun chappess on more or less the same wavelength to sort of – how shall we say – plug him back into life. Warwickshire or generally thereabouts, not too fussed really. Box 0779.

REALLY NICE BLOKE, unconventional, 48, funny, fit, good-looking, attached – invites pretty, vivacious female (age/status unimportant) to do stuff in London mainly weekdays: music, meals, hopefully more – if chemistry right. liveworld2003@yahoo.co.uk

SUCCESSFUL, INTERESTING professional man would enjoy entertaining educated, elegant and sensual woman 36-46 to the occasional long lunch in Central London – lunchintown@yahoo.co.uk

WANTED – nice, (yes, my English teacher also told me it is a 'non-word') gentle man (50'ish) with integrity who expects me to do most things (except abseiling/paragliding/bungee jumping as a hobby) (I'll applaud while you duck & dive!) Me? Well, 50'ish but with no discernible means of support or talent except for growing things, cooking things and appreciating life – rather lonely at the moment. I've been heard to say f***/s*** when the hammer hits my thumb but apart from that would rather not hear those words in the course of ordinary conversation or used as adjectives. (Picky or what?) I like junk shops and antique fairs; home-cooked food; desert skies; English moors; animals; the sound of trains in the distance at 3am in the morning and would like to Salsa if you feel you're up to it. Susan2500@lycos.com

SLIM, SINGLE GYPSY GIRL, 35 passionate – seeks exclusive position for appreciative affluent gentleman. Box 1179

STYLISH SURREY LADY (46), on a mission to meet a tall, intelligent gentleman for life's special moments. rozetinted@hotmail.com

EYE MOVES

JAMES moves your possessions. Household / office. Boxes / storage available. 020 8208 1497.

MOVING STUFF. Transit couriers and light removals professional, insured. 020 7622 0511.

EYE GARDEN

TREES, HEDGES, LAWNS, Planted, Maintained, Removed, Root Decompaction, Lawn Aeration. Patios, Decking Pressure Washed. Qualified and Insured – 020 8429 8049.

EYE JOBS

prposts.com: Public Relations Jobs. Latest UK positions, all levels. http://www.prposts.com

EYE NEED

PIANO. Aspiring pianist seeks decent upright piano. Can collect London. amies_st@yahoo.co.uk

FAILED ACTOR (Equity 40 years) and lifetime supporter of Brentford Football Club needs £1.3 million to purchase a house in Onslow Gardens. Thank you. BARCLAYS Sort 20-73-53, Account 50233471.

FRIGHTENED LADY needs £24k to escape deteriorating relationship. Barcvlays 20-10-71, 80442054. Thank you.

ANY DONATIONS?... Gratefully accepted! Please pay to: Lloyds Sc: 309725, Acc: 01321285 / HSBC Sc: 40-40-01, Acc: 61723782 / Barclays Sc: 207409, 40249300. I thank you all kindly.

MORTGAGE REQUIRED by abandoned working mother, to secure home. Too old for commercial firms. Box 0279.

CONCORDE – enthusiast seeks benefactor to subsidise supersonic flight before October. Box 1079.

PRETTY ACTRESS with aspiration, chance to study acting become a star at famous conservatorie, NY – looking for generous sponser. 10-80-12. 80319759.

HAVE CHARITY WAGER (£1000) with incredibly arrogant Tory journalist, scoffs I'll fail to recoup cost of ANY advertisement in Eye Need (£98.80). Contributions invited, any amount, to help wipe smug smile off fat face. HSBC 40-40-39, 01442457.

£7000! I work with endangered species. Please help fund my Masters Degree 11-01-23, 00198361.

NATURE RESERVE needs financial help. Love beauty and land in return. 01837 840681.

MALE 29, working hard to clear 5k overdraft. need your help Halifax 11-10-54 00082491, Many thanks, Box 0979.

ESCAPING Mugabe's madness for a new life has decimated our capital base. Debts rising. Any amount will help. HSBC 40-05-30 12229846. Grateful thanks.

YOUNG GIRL in desparate financial difficulties seeks genuine, caring patron to help rebuild life. E-mail Poole111@hotmail.com or Barclays 20-18-11 / 30734292.

PLEASE HELP funding needed – fight government in Europe "HUMAN RIGHT'S ISSUE". Mr. P PARTINGTON, Co-operative Bank 08-92-49, 01235230.

DRUG ADDICT EXBOYFRIEND robbed me of £10k. Drowning in debt. Hard working but desperate. Please help. Natwest 55-61-02 36065978.

DISABLED, in hostel, huge debts and desperate to clear them and start again. HSBC 40-47-08, 81588575.

INDUSTRIAL TRIBUNAL. The Link/Dixons/PC World. Need some help to see it through. Anyhelp much appreciated: Sort: 40-22-04. Ac: 31213830.

GENTLEWOMAN, beautiful baby, ruined by husband's adultery, fraud. Working but losing home. Help me. tja8888@yahoo.co.uk Natwest 60-24-37 05713153

PLEASE HELP. Struggling to save business. A&L s/c 72-58-26, Account 201-342116-65.

MY BELOVED, beautiful, childless, despairing wife, needs £8,000 for IVF. Heartfelt thanks. 60-19-34 / 41181263 – babossity@hotmail.com

EYE NOVELITES

BIRTHDAY Newspapers FREEPHONE 0800 906609 www.historic-newspapers.co.uk

BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS made from soap make a unique gift – http://www.soap-flowers.com/en/

GIFTS for the redhead in your life – www.redandproud.com – Tel: 01844 274635.

CARICATURES FROM PHOTOGRAPHS – Novelties, Autographs, Bongs and much more! www.lastimp.co.uk

Replying to a

PRIVATE EYE

box number?
Address your reply like this:

Box No....
PRIVATE EYE
Communications Team
3-11 Pine Street
LONDON
EC1R OJH

TITLES – LORD, LADY etc. Tel/Fax 0800 652 6641. www.elitetitles.co.uk

"WHAT A BRILLIANT SITE!" Shop for fun @ www.gizmoandwidget.com

PERSONALISED CHAMPAGNE your unique message printed on the label delivered NEXTDAY nationwide – 01279 428899 – www.nextdaychampagne.co.uk

THE WORKING CLASS can kiss my ass. The £40.00 'TITLE' is here at last (plus land of course). www.scottishhighlandtitles.co.uk

"I AND FRIENDS ARE SATISFIED WITH POISON MUGS. Daily teatime is pleasure. First order from Japan is deep emotion." 020 8527 2513 – www.poisonmugs.co.uk

www.BrownPaper.co.uk Online Sexy Shopping: Adult Toys, Lingerie and Naughty Gifts. Automated catalogue request 0870 7443021.

6 FOOT PHOTOBANNERS £39.95. 0121 241 7878 – www.ctgraphics.co.uk

CHEEKY TIES... Stylish Italian silk on the outside. Cheeky nude on the inside. www.cheekytie.com or 0779 211 5851.

EROTICA for discerning adults. Award winning videos and DVDs -- hand picked titles – and the world's best sex toys. Read the reviews and test results before you buy. Fast, secure and discreet service. Over 18s only. Available from www.blissbox.com retailers of the very best erotica and sex toys www.blissbox.co

'POEMS-R-PERFECT' ...anytime. Individually composed, serious to hilarious – anything. Details / brochure 020 8668 7862 / 020 8440 0511 or poemsrperf@hotmail.com

EYE PROPERTY

BEAT LONDON'S CONGESTION CHARGES Newly refurbished open plan office approx 1000ft2 (98m2) within 50m of Clapham Junction centre and mainline station Victoria and Waterloo only 10 minutes by train 2 hour FREE parking in adjacent superstore LA business parking permit £300pa – less than £1 a day Lease assignment Current rent £19,000pa. All enquiries BELLS COMMERCIAL 020 7924 1988.

EYE PROTECT

THE DEFENDER' – freelance minder/independent security guard. Tel 07986 808990 (message facility available).

CONFIDENTIAL DISCREET and professional security investigative and surveillance services. SEARCHERS ASSOCIATES Ltd. ASC registered. 01206 386844 – www.salsecurity.com

EYE READ

ALL ABOUT 'Too Young for Bluebells' and The Platinum Seaweed' on www.internovels.com

FREE BOOKSEARCH – No Purchase Obligation Twiggers Booksearch - 0208 878 8644. booksearch@twiggers.com

OUT OF PRINT BOOKS FOUND – free search. No obligation to purchase – 01376 562334. E-mail: Jeremy.Dore@tesco.net

SEEN ON TV: 'IN THE BUFF' Erotic Literature magazine & fantasy writing service. 8 issues just £34.95. Ffi: 01227 762500 www.inthebuffmag.com

PISS TAKING par excellence – www.ralphtritt.com

TALKING PRIVATE EYE. If you know somebody who is blind or partially sighted, PRIVATE EYE is available in audio form – so they do not need to go without their favourite publication. For more information please contact: The Talking Newspaper Association, National Recording Centre, Heathfield, East Sussex TN21 8DB. Tel: 01435 866 102

EYE SELL

RUSSIAN WATCH CATALOGUE available. Send £1 stamp to: Mr Tomanek, 23 Burnside Road, Nottingham, NG2 7HU. – www.russianwatches.co.uk

WE INCORPORATE COMPANIES – £98 + vat – tel: 01306 888542 www.formations365.co.uk/pe/

OLD PERSIAN RUGS – mostly £100 -£3000. Shed not shop - telephone first. DESMOND NORTH, East Peckham, Kent. 01622 871353.

www.ExoticDvDs.co.uk – Free Adult DvDs Delivered To Your Door.

PROMOTE... YOUR PRODUCT... Your Business...YOURSELF with full colour postcards at competitive prices. For sample pack phone 020 7737 7766 or E-mail: cardencounters@btclick.com

NEED A NEW HI-FI? For anything from DVD to Minidisc, surround sound to CD – nip down to RICHER SOUNDS and pick up the lowest-priced gear in the UK... GUARANTEED! For a free bargain-packed catalogue, call 0845 1 300 200.

FREE BLISSBOX.COM adult DVD & VHS catalogue – Call 0905 062 22 44 (calls charged at 60p per min) or send a 41p SAE to Black Dog, PO Box 34984, London SW6 4XT – EROTICA for discerning adults www.blissbox.com

www.ENJoY.co.uk – big boy toys: football, American Pool, Retro Jukeboxes.

GLASTONBURY – two tickets plus parking, special delivery. £375. 07710 723532.

QUALITY MOBILES FREE! – with any monthly contract. Buy online: www.wantafone.co.uk

EYE LEARN

GNOME STUDY – cartooning courses with EYE cartoonist. Learn at home by mail or from CD-ROM – www.draw-cartoons.com or telephone 01785 250700.

EYE SAY

TO LOVE SOMEONE is to forgive someone.

WE'RE BACK www.nhs-exposed.com – THE TRUTH BEHIND THE WHITE COAT.

THE SHADOW Home Secretary ignores corruption and police misconduct. See the website at www.dorsetvictimsupport.org

www.guardianreadersrobthepoor.org.uk – www.arestudents middle classwankers.org.uk – www.greeningthegreenbelt.org.uk – www.plannersattheodpm.org.uk

A TYPICAL asylum seeker www.dradoko.com

YOUR FRIENDS would like to know. Inform them – www.friendsinformed.com

EYE TECH

SMS TEXT MARKETING WORKS! text 077 66 40 41 42 with the word "eye" to receive info. Or visit http://sms.a-q.co.uk

COMPUTER TROUBLE? let a genuine pc expert help you with advice, installation, setup, programming and trouble-shooting – and save yourself some big headaches. Call TOBY on 020 7229 3001 for friendly, professional advice.

BESPOKE TAILORED BUSINESS SYSTEMS. From front-end applications to back-end databases. Reporting, Data Warehouse, Billing, Time Recording and Ordering systems. Full analysis, design and implementation of systems and processes. Fixed-price or time & materials from £10k to £10m+. Contact Danny Weisman on 07710 236 921 or enquiries@tallystick.info

EYE CARE

ERECTION PROBLEMS? solved. Delivered tomorrow - effective 30 minutes. lowest prices. Telephone 01299 250464.

ERECTION PERFECTION with Viagra from EUROMED. Also Testosterone creams for men/women – enhances sexual ability/libido. 0701 071 8424.

ERECTION CORRECTION tablets, cheapest on earth – www.generic-viagras.com

EYE CONTACT

FLIRT LINE: CALL 09099 100 143 -- www.phoneflirts.co.uk -- 75p per min PO Box 189 CA4 8GW.

SPEED DATING – the new way to meet other professionals. 20+ three minute face-to face dates in 1 night 08702 430 935 www.speeddater.co.uk

THAI CONNECTION – Thailand's oldest agency. Over 650 marriages. Videos, brochure: 01582 481725.

NATURAL FRIENDS, where relationships just click. Free brochure 0800 281 933 www.natural-friends.com

CONTACT GENUINE single women & men online 24hrs. 60p/min JCG, tn219dz, 09050 626 088.

VEGETARIAN/VEGAN? Unattached? VMM is the introduction agency specially for you. Tel: 01925 601609 -- www.veggiematchmakers.com

LADIES IN WAITING just 'DINING' to meet you! Black tie balls, dinner parties, skiing, foreign travel and sporting events. Tel: 08704 424243. – dinnerdates.com

CALL 09099 100 146 -- www.fantasyphone.co.uk – 75p per min PO Box 189 CA4 8GW.

LONESOME OXBRIDGE BLUES? Why not meet somebody new at www.BluesMatch.com

MATCHMAKER MAG for adults contacts. Over 900 photos. Approval copy from: MATCHMAKER, (S.76), Chorley, PR7 4BS. Or ring: 01257 483335 (24 hours).

RUSSIAN LADIES – attractive and sincere – seek relationship/marriage. Meet many Russian ladies in Britain. Unlimited introductions. Excellent success rate. IFM 01708 478697 – www.intromoscow.co.uk

Findyourperfectpartner.com – you may just click! Our MutualMatch system is the world's most accurate. 7-day free full membership.

1200 EASTERN EUROPEAN LADIES seek relationship/marriage with kind Western men. Full details see: www.wantabride.co.uk

EURO-ORIENTAL Introductions Meet your perfect oriental partner in the UK, for love, romance or marriage. Register free! 01442 386102 info@littlefish-intl.com – http://littlefish-intl.com

BEAUTIFUL RUSSIAN LADIES. Colour brochures and much more. Call Nick & Lilya. 01423 566766 (24hrs) www.russian-rendezvous.co.uk

THE BEST PLACE to meet and see beautiful girls and chat LIVE – www.sexygirlchat.com

ADDITIONS – 'ATTACHED' Discreet Loving Agency for married people. 020 8905 3304, 020 8958 9657.

LIVE PSYCHIC 0906 734 3707.** Chat & Date 0906 752 6299*,Live 1-2-1 Chat 0906 734 3206**, Gay Chat 0906 952 6006*, Adult Contact Ads 0905 235 5819**, http://www.harmonypartners.co.uk – PO Box 17,Ashford,TN23 7YQ. Calls cost *75p/**£1/min from BT Landlines.

RESPECTABLE SINCERE marriage-minded Thai ladies seek like-minded gentlemen. Free brochure/ video. "Lawrence Lynch – dream weaver" (Louis Theroux BBC). 01562 748600 (24hrs). www.thai-professional.com

NEW OVER-50'S friendship club and newsletter. Call 0121 7837014 or write to Good Companions 511 Garretts Green Lane, Birmingham B33 0SG.

ATTACHED? SEEKING ROMANCE? Call David at LOVINGLINKS 020 7602 8727. Info line 0906 550 1361 (call cost £1 a minute)– www.lovinglinks.co.uk Discreet dating at the speed of E-mail.

AGED 30-49 TABLE FOR 2? Party of 8? New friends link and newsletter. Ring/text 07909 850323 or write to Buddies. PO Box 323, Brighton BN1 8UZ.

EMOTIONALLY SECURE, friendly, adventurous, open minded couple, 40, seek new friends to enhance their fun. London. Box 1279.

EYE CONTACT

BI MALE organising international Bi private parties. Po Box 45510, London NW1 8WT.

GAY MEN! up market introductions, dinner parties, theatre, opera evenings – www.outandout.co.uk – TEL: 020 8998 8000. Established 10 years.

EYE WORK

FORMER IT MANAGER, BSc, MBA, good management/ support skills – Macintosh, Microsoft, Linux, networking, all rounder, seeks London position. All offers considered. eyework@seeworks.f9.co.uk

EYE WANT

CARTOOONIST SEEKS GAG WRITER – proceeds split 50/50. E-mail: gagwriter@commas.co.uk

EYE WEAR

TAKING THE PITH? Sexy, sassy, sensationally stylish! The Sunhat for this season! www.kouloura.com/pith/

It only costs £10.00

to have your advertisement

REPEATED

on

PRIVATE EYE MAGAZINE'S

web-site

www.private-eye.co.uk

FOR TWO WEEKS!

Just specify, when booking, if you would like to be included, and have your advertisement seen by thousands more readers –all over the world...

GLOBAL CORP. INC

Chief Executive.

Salary - gargantuan obscene bonus + benefits.

Global Corp. Inc are looking for a major player to lead their business to total world domination. Someone who is pathologically driven to get results, preferably with a God complex.

A person who knows they are the 'dogs' and never takes no for an answer. A born, boardroom big kahuna, who is not afraid to put his cojones on the line.

If you have over 10 years experience of steamrollering your policies over wimpish, superannuated colleagues and shouting loudly at lesser mortals then we have a huge office on the top floor waiting for you.

Ring 0208 920 2295 to tell us when you're starting.

ARE YOU POWER MAD? Energizer

They say speed is

relative.

Our 9-3 Aero is descended from jet planes.

Saab's aeronautical legacy of advanced aerodynamics, high performance and technology is never more evident than in a car that wears the 'Aero' badge. With its 210 bhp turbocharged engine and 0-60mph time of just 7.5 seconds, the new 9-3 Aero delivers performance that leaves its competitors well and truly grounded. And thanks to its exclusive styling kit designed to reduce body lift by 70%, the 9-3 Aero remains firmly stuck to the tarmac - unlike its jet plane predecessors.

The Saab 9-3 Aero. £22,895 on the road. Visit your nearest Saab dealer or call 0845 300 93 95.
www.saab.co.uk

The new Saab 93 Aero.

OFFICIAL FUEL CONSUMPTION IN MPG (LITRES/100KM): URBAN 22.1 (12.8), EXTRA URBAN 41.5 (6.8), COMBINED 31.4 (9.0). CO_2 EMISSIONS 218 G/KM. ALL FIGURES FOR SAAB 9-3 AERO SPORT SALOON (210 BHP) WITH MANUAL GEARBOX. 9-3 RANGE FROM £18,495.

9 770032 888099 18>